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MYSTERY

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TOP PRIVATE EYE INTERVIEWED

BIG ENTERTAINMENT SECTION

Reviews, Puzzles, Games

To Our Readers:

In this issue of *Mystery Monthly* we offer our second mystery of novella length—*The Lady-Killer*, by Phil Berger. It features Harry Krim, a long-haired New York private eye pitted against a mastermind who involves Krim in the murders of the private eye's women friends. It's a tough, contemporary story.

Presenting this story is in keeping with our policy of printing the best in both novella-length and short story-length fiction. It is our aim to be contemporary, exciting, and to deliver solid entertainment—as well as the most up-to-date reports on mystery films, books, and television. To all this we add our Monthly Contest, our puzzle-entertainment section, and *The Crime Lab*— expert reportage by George O'Toole on the latest developments in the real world of spies, detection, and criminology.

We are also very interested in *your* reaction to *Mystery Monthly*. We welcome comments on the magazine in general, on individual stories, and on your preference on such matters as detective versus spy stories, crime versus supernatural mystery stories, and long pieces of fiction versus shorter ones. So please drop us a line—even if it's a postcard—and let us know how you feel.

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MYSTERY

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MOVIES

MYSTERY

Martin Ritt is a police commissioner in The End of the Game, *whose youthful bet with a friend leads to several murders and considerable intrigue over a period of thirty years.*

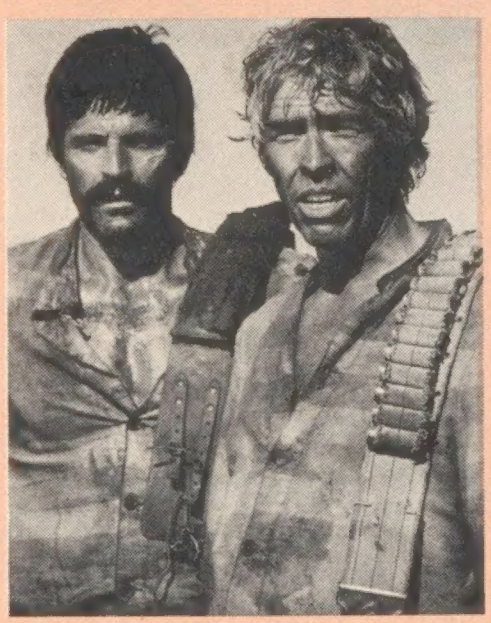
Jon Voight and Jacqueline Bisset are involved in an intricate murder plot in the psychological thriller, The End of the Game.

A new murder mystery, two action-filled Westerns, and a preview of the most stylish and star-studded Sherlock Holmes ever filmed comprise this month's column. Yes indeed, there are alternatives to sitting on the beach.

End of the Game (Twentieth Century-Fox) is a psychological thriller based on the classic crime novel *The Judge and His Hangman,* by Friedrich Durrenmatt. Two young Swiss, one a police commissioner (Martin Ritt) and the other an industrialist (Robert Shaw—the fisherman in *Jaws*), make a bet during the mid-1940s. Shaw insists that he can commit a murder without being caught. Both of the men are in love with the same girl, and in front of his friend, Shaw pushes the girl from the Galata bridge. The Turkish police investigate the death and rule it a suicide. Some thirty years later a policeman and assistant of Ritt's is discovered dead in his car. All signs lead to Shaw.

Ritt's new assistant, played by Jon Voight, now enters the case. He investigates Shaw, who is now an important industrialist dealing in arms and protected by the government. However, after learning of the original bet in Istanbul, Voight's suspicions shift to his boss. The affair is complicated further by the presence of Jacqueline Bisset as a woman with mysterious loyalties. Several dramatic encounters conclude what amounts to a sinister chess game, whose rules are ambition, deception, and an unusual form of justice. Directed by Maximilian Schell, *End of the Game* was shot on location in Istanbul and Berne, Switzerland.

In recent years American Westerns (as opposed to the spaghetti variety) have been few and far between. Policemen have become the new sheriffs, muggers and Mafia *capi* the new desperadoes. However, as audiences have tired of the overabundant cops and robbers, there



has been a renewed interest in the frontier dramas that Hollywood makes so well.

A new contribution to the tradition of *Shane* and *High Noon* is **The Last Hard Men** (Twentieth Century-Fox). Based on the novel *Gun Down,* by Brian Garfield (famous for *Death Wish*), the film is set in the Arizona Territory of 1909. Charlton Heston plays an aging lawman who has retired, hoping no longer to need his guns. However, earlier in his career Heston had captured a half-Navajo train robber and killer (James Coburn), and in the resulting shoot-out, accidentally killed Coburn's pregnant wife. Intent on revenge, Coburn, along with six other murderers, escapes from Yuma prison. He kidnaps Heston's daughter (Barbara Hershey), thereby forcing the ex-lawman to take up his guns for the challenge. Other characters pitted in what develops into a classic frontier duel include a young Eastern engineer in love with the girl, a tough sidekick of Coburn's, and the new sheriff whose hands are tied by the law he is bound to enforce.

If all this sounds like you've seen it before, no doubt you're right. Western characters and themes have a habit of repeating themselves, albeit with new faces and twists. However, the scenic realism, the gritty dialogue, and the bone-jarring action common to the form more than make up for any duplication in plot. *The Last Hard Men* was shot on location in Arizona. It is directed by Andrew V.

(Above left) Barbara Hershey is the victim of an outlaw's revenge plot against the lawman who captured him in The Last Hard Men. *(Below left) Jorge Rivera and James Coburn play two convicted murderers.*

Jack Nicholson (right), a rustler and train robber, shouts the alarm, as he and Randy Quaid are surprised while gathering money from a creek, after the looting of a train in The Missouri Breaks.

McLaglen, who is responsible for many episodes of what I always considered one of the best Westerns in any medium: the sorely missed *Gunsmoke*.

You don't have to like Westerns, or even be a suspense fan, to be excited by **The Missouri Breaks** (United Artists). Any film that puts in conflict Marlon Brando and Jack Nicholson, two of the best actors presently working in film, has got to merit attention. Written by Tom McGuane, whose novels include *The Sporting Club*, *The Bushwhacked Piano*, and *92 in the Shade*, the film is set in the Montana of the 1880s. Brando is a professional gunman hired by a wealthy rancher to "regulate" (read eliminate) the squatters, cattle and horse thieves, and outlaws in general who are preying on the area. One particularly colorful group of rustlers is led by Nicholson, who is as adept at gambling, drinking, and carousing as he is at stealing. Understandably, he wins the affections of the rancher's daughter, thereby making him all the more worthy of the gunman's attention. When the schizophrenic Brando begins his murderous assignment, what results is an inevitable physical and psychological showdown between the two giant screen personalities of the day.

This is the first time the two Academy Award winners have appeared together in a film. It is Nicholson's first major film since *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, for which he won the award, and the film marks Brando's silver anniversary as a motion picture star. *The Missouri Breaks* is directed by Arthur Penn, whose past pictures include *Bonnie and Clyde*, *Little Big Man*, *The Chase*, and *Night Moves*. If you miss this Western, you deserve to hang.

Though not scheduled for release until just before Christmas, **The Seven-Per-Cent Solution** (Universal) promises to be such a lavishly entertaining film that it deserves all the attention we can pay it.

Sir Laurence Olivier plays a timid Moriarty in the star-studded Herbert Ross production of Nicholas Meyer's bestseller, The Seven-Per-Cent Solution.

Based on the best-selling novel of the same name—author Nicholas Meyer also wrote the script—the film unites the twin masters of deduction, Sherlock Holmes and Sigmund Freud. Worried about his friend's serious addiction to cocaine (which Holmes takes in a "seven-per-cent solution" with water), Doctor Watson devises a plan to get the detective to Vienna where, under the supervision of the famous psychoanalyst, he can undergo drug withdrawal. Though the cure, involving hypnosis, is eventually successful, it marks only the beginning of the adventure, as the pair then join hands to rescue an operatic contralto kidnapped by a debt-ridden baron. The chase through the streets of Vienna, and on a train to Istanbul, displays the two legendary searchers for truth as a formidable team.

Though the stories of Sherlock Holmes have been brought to the screen countless times before, never has it been done in such an extravagant production. Just listen to this cast: Nicol Williamson as Holmes, Alan Arkin as Freud, and Robert Duvall (he was counselor to the Corleone family in both *Godfather* movies) appearing as Watson. What's more, Vanessa Redgrave plays the lady in distress, Sir Laurence Olivier is a timid Moriarty, Joel Grey is a villain, and Samantha Eggar has the role of Watson's wife. The film was shot on location in London, Vienna, and the Austrian countryside, and the director is Herbert Ross, whose other stylish entertainments include *Funny Lady*, *The Sunshine Boys*, and *The Owl and the Pussycat*. Believe me, you'll be hearing more about *The Seven-Per-Cent Solution*. Here and elsewhere.

—Steven Vail

MYSTERY ON THE HOME SCREEN

Police procedurals have long been a popular form of television crime drama. Though many of the shows have been off the screen for years, how can anyone forget such grippers as *The Lineup*, *The Naked City*, *M Squad*, *Highway Patrol*, and of course the original of them all, Jack Webb's *Dragnet*? Remember how each *Dragnet* episode used to begin? "It was Tuesday, January eleventh. It was cool in Los Angeles. We were working the Day Watch out of Forgery Division. My partner's Frank Smith. The boss is Captain Welsh. My name's Friday." The names were always changed to protect the innocent, and all Friday ever wanted was the "facts." It may seem a little sterile from the perspective of twenty years, but from 1952 until its disappearance in 1959, *Dragnet* was one of the most popular television shows in the country. Following in the wake of *Gangbusters*, *Your FBI*, and other radio and television melodramas, *Dragnet* was the first show to realistically portray average policemen following their routine crime-fighting procedures. The show was so authentic in appearance that when they announced the sentences given the convicts at the end, it was hard to believe that the contrite-looking men on the tube were only actors rather than real live criminals.

The police dramas that have followed *Dragnet* onto the home screen have generally attempted to match its standards of realism and legitimate police routine. However, unlike the dour Sergeant Friday, who was all work and no play, and whose private life always remained a mystery, the police heroes of the mid-Seventies are fully fleshed-out characters, with personalities separate from and sometimes even in conflict with their professional identities.

Michael Douglas and Karl Malden play an interestingly paired and fully believable crime-fighting team in the popular series The Streets of San Francisco.

The two police shows we focus on this month are both acceptably realistic. What's more they both feature colorful characters who just happen to be policemen and a policewoman.

The Streets of San Francisco (Thursday evening on ABC) has been on the air since 1971. Its success stems less from the novelty of its plots (what's an original crime story when there's so much competition?) than from the appeal of its crime-fighting partners. Karl Malden is veteran police lieutenant Mike Stone, and his young colleague, Inspector Steve Keller, is played by Michael Douglas. Their difference in ages and temperaments creates an unstated tension that sustains interest during the routine moments of a case. Malden, with his small eyes and wonderfully bulbous nose, is fully believable as the stubborn and irascible senior member of the team. His displays of temper evoke fond memories of the defiant priest he portrayed in *On the Waterfront*, and he brings the same convincing intensity to the role of a California cop. Of course no one else but the easygoing Douglas could possibly put up with him. All bright eyes and charm, he may be a little better looking than your average cop on the beat, but he is a perfect foil for Malden. Besides, anyone who has ever been the victim of a crime knows that it's just such an unlikely team that comes to your door: one all sympathy and patience, the other bored and matter-of-fact. This display of distinct personalities is even more routinely developed when it comes to interrogating suspects. I have yet to see Malden and Douglas in just such a scene, but undoubtedly Malden would threaten the prisoner with the loss of his head, while Douglas would intervene to win the hapless criminal's trust. Indeed such pairing is a solidly realistic touch.

Concern for character, both on and off the job, is one of the primary attractions of *The Streets of San Francisco*. In a recent episode involving a cat burglar, Stone, who is a widower with a teenage daughter, falls in love with a female detective also assigned to the case. Their plans to marry are undermined by their competitiveness on the job, their growing realization that professional rivalry would ultimately sabotage the union. The drama is sensitive and touching, and would certainly ring true with anyone who has ever found himself in a comparable situation. It is such sideline developments within the context of a crime story that no doubt have contributed to the relatively long run of this show. And of course the setting itself deserves credit. With its hills, its bay, its spotless streets and Victorian buildings, San Francisco is an ideal backdrop for a show which regularly takes its heroes all over the city. It doesn't hurt to make the ride as pleasant as possible.

Policewoman (Tuesday evening on NBC) originally began as an episode of *Police Story*, the crime series created by author and ex-policeman Joseph Wambaugh. The spin-off about a four-man police team, one of whose members is a woman, is an inevitable response to the recent movement of policewomen around the country into active crime-fighting roles. Starring Angie Dickinson as Sergeant Pepper Anderson, and Earl Holliman as Sergeant Bill Crowley, the show features the team working a variety of crime areas, ranging from homicide to the vice squad, from bunko detail to juvenile violations. Predictably, the stunning Sergeant Anderson is often called upon to work undercover, and equally predictably, at least in every show I've seen, her unknowing criminal colleagues always want to take her traveling. Perhaps in one episode the writers will let her go.

Unfortunately, the story lines of *Policewoman* leave a lot to be desired. The individual cases are rarely exceptional, and happy circumstance and luck—such as a phone call to Pepper just as she's about to be shot—are the common means for averting disaster. Pepper's luxurious duplex apartment (on a cop's salary?) stretches credibility some-

Robert Vaughn (who played one of the agents in The Man From U.N.C.L.E.) *made his TV directorial debut directing an episode of* Police Woman, *starring Angie Dickinson.*

what, but then again I wouldn't want to see such a beauty living in a dump.

What *Policewoman* lacks in plot and thorough realism it makes up for elsewhere, such as by the intimate family-like camaraderie it depicts among policemen and women. Along with Holliman, who plays a tough Irish cop, the other members of the team include Ed Bernard, a black detective, and Charles Dierkop, a broken-nosed officer who looks less like a cop than the hoodlum he has more often portrayed. This motley crew seems genuinely happy working together, and their banter and sense of play is exactly what one hears in most police stations. However, the most distinctive element of this show is the obvious. It is the first successful effort to take a female crime-fighter seriously. Pepper is shown not a hint of condescension by her colleagues, and she pulls her own weight and gets her share of bruises, doing both without sacrificing an inch of femininity. Considering it has been more than a year since the first American policewoman was killed in the line of duty, this positive image is appropriately well deserved. Indeed the spunky Pepper Anderson, now entering her third season, is a welcome television heroine.

—MIKE MADRID

BOOKS

MYSTERY MONTHLY REVIEWS

With some of the top authors in the field making their appearance, it's been a busy month for mystery and suspense readers. In obvious celebration of the Bicentennial, two of the books we review involve conspiracies to take over America, from different political directions, and for equally dissimilar reasons. There is also a new international spy thriller by a seasoned professional, as well as another recently discovered manuscript by the famous doctor-scribe John Hamish Watson.

Irving Wallace is not generally thought of as an author of suspense. The perennially best-selling writer is instead known for turning provocative subjects into highly readable novels that in turn result in gold mines. Subjects he has explored in the past include sex—*The Chapman Report*; a black president—*The Man*; the Nobel Prize awards—*The Prize*; and Hollywood heroine worship—*The Fan Club*. In his latest novel, **The R Document** (Simon & Schuster, $8.95), Wallace again addresses a matter of engaging interest and timely signficance. *The R Document* concerns a conspiracy to take over the country, not by the Russians, the Chinese, or any other outside force, but by that prime post-Watergate villain, the FBI.

The book opens amidst a period of rising crime and violence throughout the country. Americans have become so alarmed by the domestic turmoil that they have supported a new amendment to the Constitution which would allow for a suspension of the Bill of Rights, when necessary, to protect "national security," and which would also give exceptional emergency powers to the director of the

FBI. Only one more state, California, must ratify Amendment Thirty-Five for it to become law, and in order to assure its passage, Attorney General Chris Collins is sent out by the president to do some last minute lobbying. Before he leaves, however, the idealistic attorney general learns of the existence of a mysterious R Document, which his dying predecessor warns him about. The document is somehow connected to Amendment Thirty-Five, and Collins' search for its meaning unveils a conspiracy too extensive to at first be believable, involving the terrorizing of California leaders, a "model town" whose citizens have been totally stripped of their constitutional rights, and a concentration camp being prepared for the time when the amendment has become law. All signs point to Vernon T. Tynan, the director of the FBI, as the force behind the conspiracy, but Collins' revelations are dismissed by the president, and the attorney general soon becomes the victim of attempted sexual blackmail. In addition, a scandal in his wife's past is suddenly unearthed. Despite the efforts to silence him, Collins continues his hunt for the R Document, knowing that it is only through such concrete evidence that the final ratification can be averted.

Wallace's novel is a genuine thriller: intricately plotted, fast-paced, and suspenseful. Moreover, *The R Document* is also a primer (or a refresher course, depending on one's education) on the history and development of the Bill of Rights. It has often been said that for tyranny to come to America, it would have to be voted in, as indeed was done in Nazi Germany. *The R Document* is a scenario for just such a legal dictatorship, and the recent revelations concerning the lawlessness of the FBI make the book's fictional possibilities all the more chilling.

• • •

The Whisper of the Axe (Dial, $8.95) is Richard Condon's gift to the Bicentennial year. The author of such suspense classics as *The Manchurian Candidate*, *Mile High*, and *Winter Kills*, here turns his talents to the creation of the second American Revolution. Set to begin on July 4, 1976, this latest and most violent upheaval is planned for thirty cities across the country, and scheduled to last from five to eight and a half years. Estimated costs start at two and a half billion dollars, and it is predicted that sixty million lives, or about a fourth of the population, will be lost before the reign of terror ends. The purpose of this rather ambitious bloodbath is not power, but a curious blend of altruism and punishment. Those responsible have no desire to govern the America they seek to destroy. Rather it is hoped that a new, more just America will be reborn from its ashes, and that consequently their violence will lead to permanent salvation.

The mastermind of this diabolical plot is Agatha Teel, a beautiful black lawyer, who is nationally famous not only for her trial successes but also for her singing ability—she has cut a best-selling record—and her status as celebrated hostess for jet setters, diplomats, business tycoons, and Washington power brokers. Earning more than two hundred thousand dollars a year, and photographed for all the columns, she is a black-female success story within white-masculine America. Not so ironically, it is precisely her unusual distinction, her position in between the two worlds of oppressor and oppressed—belonging to neither, and hating them both—that leads her to plan her far-reaching personal mission of revenge. The guerrilla campaign itself is as comprehensive as anything planned by a legitimate government during wartime. Funded by heroin trafficking, Teel arranges for a cadre of twelve men and women—all of whom have served time for armed robbery and have had previous combat experience—to be trained in China. Over a period of four years they are taught arson, the sabotage of water and electrical systems, and how to bomb churches, theaters, schools, and playgrounds. They also undergo extensive

Richard Condon

brainwashing (a special interest of Condon's) to remove all lingering traces of both mercy and fear. Fashioned into perfectly equipped human fighting machines, they return to the United States where stockpiles of nuclear bombs and an army of seven hundred thousand guerrilla fighters await their leadership.

Unbeknownest to Teel, however, the CIA has an agent reporting from China, as does the Army. Their knowledge of the impending violence and their efforts to stop it, along with the carefully programmed guerrilla campaign, are the elements from which suspense would normally be expected to flow. I say "normally" because *The Whisper of the Axe* is surprisingly short of either tension or dramatic interest. The problem is that Agatha Teel, the incestuous CIA agent, and most of the other characters in the Condon novel are too extreme to be believable, as is the revolution they are respectively for and against. It is apparent that Condon is writing a satire, both of guerrilla warfare and government intelligence operations, and seen from that perspective the book certainly does have merit. It is even quite humorous in parts, such as when the agents in China are given comic books and Albanian editions of *Playboy*.

Yet it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for a novel to accommodate both the needs of satire and suspense. Readers expecting a harrowing account of revolutionary violence are in for a disappointment. Though it does effectively make its points, this latest Condon is not the absorbing reading experience I was anticipating.

• • •

Agent in Place by Helen MacInnes (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, $8.95) gives ample proof that there is no shortage of activity in the intelligence community, despite détente and a vulnerably exposed CIA. The author of *The Salzburg Connection*, *Message from Malaga*, and *The Snare of the Hunter* also shows that she is still one of the top practitioners of the spy genre. The story concerns a top secret NATO memorandum, a copy of which is under analysis by Shandon House, a government "think tank" in New Jersey. The nonsecret parts of the memorandum reveal the current thinking of NATO, and Charles Kelso, an analyst with the installation, believes that the public has the right to be informed of its contents. Appropriating the entire document, he arranges, with a friend's help, for a *New York Times* reporter to see the unclassified sections. The friend and middleman is Rick Nealy, who is in reality a Russian "sleeper" named Alexis who is after the document. Before the reporter arrives, Alexis manages to photograph the memorandum, including the classified sections in which appears a list of NATO agents within the Soviet Union. The plot thickens when the contact in Russia to whom Alexis sends the document is precisely one of those agents, now obviously forced to defect. An additional wrinkle of intrigue results from the fact that Charles has used his brother's typewriter, and Tom Kelso, who is himself a reporter for the *Times*, now falls under suspicion.

The story moves from Washington and New York to the French Riviera, where the excaping agent is being hidden on his way to NATO headquarters in Brussels. His safe passage is the responsibility of an Englishman working undercover as a businessman. He is also a friend of the Kelso's, and consequently his motivation in protecting the agent is personal as well as professional. The arrival of Russian agents in town puts his abilities of deception squarely to the test.

Agent in Place is slow-moving in parts, and its labyrinthine plot is occasionally confusing. However, both the pace and tension quicken towards the end, and there is enough espionage intrigue—including murder, triple agents, and the use of sophisticated electronic gadgetry—to satisfy the most cynical spy buff. If this latest Helen MacInnes is any indication, détente may end up being a creative boost to the espionage novel. After all, an East-West easing of tensions only poses more of a challenge for the agents of both sides. Covers must be even more secure, and intelligence gathered with more discretion. Any additional challenge for spies becomes a challenge for their creators. Consequently the benefits of détente may prove to be literary as well as diplomatic.

• • •

Sherlock Holmes' fans have a reason to rejoice. Another one of Dr. Watson's "posthumous memoirs" has recently been unearthed. What's more, it has found its way into the hands of Nicholas Meyer, the "editor" responsible for bringing us *The Seven-Per-Cent Solution*. This latest case involving the legendary detective is called **The West End Horror** (Dutton, $7.95), and it is every bit as intriguing as the original.

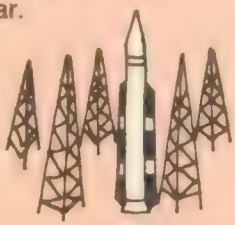
The case begins when Holmes and Watson are visited at Baker Street by a drama critic by the name of Bernard Shaw. (The year is 1895 and Shaw has yet to establish himself as a playwright.) Shaw informs the detective and doctor of the murder of Jonathan McCarthy, a critic for a rival paper. The pair consent to look into the case, and arriving at the scene they discover that the deceased has left, as a clue, a copy of Shakespeare open to a passage from *Romeo and Juliet*. The dramatic reference, as well as McCarthy's profession, lead Watson and Holmes into the heart of the West End theater community. Luminaries that they encounter along the way include Oscar Wilde, Gilbert and Sullivan, the actress Ellen Terry, and a box office clerk named Bram Stoker, who is secretly writing a very unusual novel (an obvious first draft version of his famed *Dracula*). The case becomes progressively more mysterious when the mistress of McCarthy is found with her throat cut, and both Holmes and Watson are attacked and forced to swallow a strange, bitter-tasting liquid. Though Inspector Lestrade of Scotland Yard believes he has solved the case with the arrest of an Indian, Holmes is not even momentarily swayed. From what he has seen, there is much more at stake than two related murders, and as usual, he is right. Indeed the horror that is ultimately discovered as the root of the case is beyond the wildest imaginings of even so clever a character as Shaw himself.

Dr. Watson, with the able editorial assistance of Meyer, has once again done a service both to himself and his detective colleague. Holmes was initially opposed to recording the case, and we are all considerably fortunate that his objections were eventually withdrawn. In its complexity and yet ultimately logical explanation, the case is well worth chronicling. Holmes is as astute as ever, detecting seven different splashes on a policeman's uniform and thereby identifying the various neighborhoods through which he has passed. The characters he and the doctor encounter are among the most colorful in London. Moreover, Watson's memoir provides a vivid picture of the puritanism, the decadence, the wit, and the glamor that so distinguished the era. *The West End Horror* is vintage Sherlock Holmes that even Moriarty would have to admire.

MINI-REVIEWS

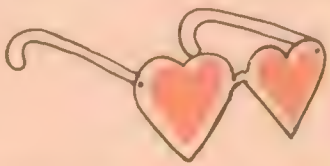
Gently with the Painters, by Alan Hunter (Macmillan, $6.95). A young artist named Shirley Johnson is found with a letter opener in her back after an evening meeting of the local palette group. Superintendent George Gently eventually gets the case, which he finds considerably perplexing. His only clue is the victim's enigmatic last painting, "Dark Destroyer." What's more it appears that a fellow artist is deliberately withholding information, and Shirley's husband is lying. This is the latest in the Gently series of British puzzlers.

The Secret List of Heinrich Roehm, by Michael Barak (Morrow, $6.95). It is two years before the Yom Kippur War, and Israeli commandos capture what appears to be a complete radar station in Egypt. In fact the station is a nuclear-equipped, Russian-manned missile site, whose missiles are aimed not at Israel, but at the Arab oil-producing nations. The Soviet Union is attempting to gain control of the world's oil, and spies from all sides soon come into conflict. The Israeli author served as a paratrooper during the Yom Kippur War.



The Star Spangled Contract, by Jim Garrison (McGraw-Hill, $8.95). Hit men from the CIA and the DIA have been hired by Washington right-wingers to assassinate the liberal president when he visits Kansas City. A loyal undercover agent seeks desperately to stop them, by setting one agency against another. Garrison, you may recall, was the New Orleans District Attorney who made national headlines for his investigation of the John Kennedy assassination.

Last Seen Wearing, by Colin Dexter (St. Martin's, $7.95). Though only seventeen years old, Valerie Taylor was attracted to older men. She was involved with several at the same time, so when she disappeared no one knew whether she'd left with one of them, or was murdered. Two years later a man closely connected with Valerie's disappearance is found brutally slain, and Chief Inspector Morse is called in to investigate. Dexter's previous whodunit was *Last Bus to Woodstock*.



Bullets for Macbeth, by Marvin Kaye (Saturday Review Press, $8.95). Hilary Quayle and her assistant, Gene, are hired to handle the publicity for an extravagant production of *Macbeth* to be presented at Madison Square Garden. The play proceeds as usual until the night of the technical-dress rehearsal when there is a gunshot during the blackout, and one of the corpses turns out to be real. Suspecting that the solution can be found within

the play itself, Hilary studies the text, and ends up in a library in Washington, D.C. This is the latest in Kaye's series of Hilary Quayle mysteries.

Leisure Dying, by Lillian O'Donnell (Putnam's Red Mask, $6.95). Detective Norah Mulcahaney arrests three young thugs responsible for murdering an elderly man in Central Park. One of the boys confesses to a series of murders of old women living in West Side hotels. Norah's husband, Lieutenant Joe Capretto, has already investigated the deaths and attributed them to "natural causes." Consequently, Norah's efforts to determine the veracity of the confession puts her in conflict with her husband. This novel of Norah Mulcahaney is the fifth in a series.

The Invaders, by Walter Kempley (Saturday Review Press, $8.95). The Vietnam War is still going on, and Saigon is filled with U.S. deserters, most of whom are black. A North Vietnamese sergeant, who lost his wife to B-52 bombs, joins with one of the most vicious of the deserters to bring the war "home" to America. Their invasion plans for New York City are suspected by only one man, who is forced to single-handedly disrupt their mission. The action moves from Saigon to Marseilles and then to New York.

Tumbleweed, by Janwillem van de Wetering (Houghton Mifflin, $6.95). Detectives Grikpstra and De Gier of the Amsterdam police force are assigned to investigate the murder of a high-class prostitute living in a houseboat. Her three regular customers all appear to be innocent, and the only clues suggest that the victim was involved with sorcery. Evidence drawn from the woman's past sheds light on the case, and an extensive chase is soon underway. The author is a former Dutch policeman. His first mystery was *Outsider in Amsterdam*, and he has also published two other books about his experiences with Zen Buddhism.

The Terrarium, by Lee Head (Putnam's, $7.95). Lexey Jane Pellazoni is sixty-seven years old, rich and arthritic. Searching for her missing daughter, she arrives at a posh health spa in Dallas where the rooms appear to be bugged. Other secrets she discovers include a U.S. senator wheeling and dealing in the stock market, and the spa's connection with organized crime. This is the first appearance of this modern Miss Marple.

Snake, by James McClure (Harper, $7.95). Lieutenant Kramer of the South African police force, along with his Bantu assistant, investigates the mysterious death of a nightclub entertainer who may or may not have been killed by the snake she used in her act. This biracial police team, operating in their racially restrictive country, has appeared before in McClure's *The Gooseberry Fool*, *The Caterpillar Cop*, and *The Steam Pig*.

—Tom Seligson

THE MYSTERY MONTHLY INTERVIEW

WITH A PRIVATE DETECTIVE

The fictional image of the private detective is as varied as the authors who have created it. Consider, for example, the armchair genius of Nero Wolfe, the aggressive persistence of Hercule Poirot, and the two-fisted machismo of Mike Hammer. Though a few authors have drawn from first-hand experience—Dashiell Hammett worked for eight years as a Pinkerton investigator—most of the well-known mystery heroes are products of the imagination. Does that mean that the literary detective is a fantasy figure? Or if not, to what extent do our fictional favorites offer true representation of the profession?

To answer these questions, we have sought out an actively working private investigator, who also happens to be a mystery fan. Anthony Spiesman is a thirty-three-year-old New Yorker who, after years of experience with some of the large detective agencies, is now on his own. His one-room office in lower Manhattan is comfortably cluttered with bookcases, plants, a plastic skull, and a framed picture of Sherlock Holmes. Like Conan Doyle's detective, Spiesman keeps a violin in the corner which he plays to relax during cases.

Photo by Sheila Yurman

MYSTERY: Could you give us a brief description of your background before becoming a detective?

SPIESMAN: I went to school all over the country, and then to college in California and theological school in New Jersey. I was very interested in comparative religions, and once thought of going into a seminary. I was also in the Army for three years, and I've had a wide variety of jobs.

MYSTERY: How did you end up becoming a detective?

SPIESMAN: I'm cursed with an insatiable curiosity to learn lots of different things, and not limit myself to any one area. In trying to figure out what I could do that would best suit my abilities, I sort of evolved into this field.

MYSTERY: Where you always interested in mysteries?

SPIESMAN: Yes, ever since I was a kid and began reading Sherlock Holmes. Also I had a real case of my own when I was about fifteen. A girl I knew used me as an excuse to run away from her parents. She stole her mother's fur coat and disappeared for three days. The police couldn't find her. Because she had told her mother she was with me, I felt guilty about it, and decided to track her down myself. After three days, I finally found her in a restaurant in another part of town. I loved solving the case, and looking back on it now, that experience probably helped set my direction.

MYSTERY: How long have you been a professional detective?

SPIESMAN: About ten years. I started in the Army, where I was in the investigative part of the military police. As a result of the Army experience I got a job with the Burns Agency.

MYSTERY: Is that the usual procedure when starting out in the field—getting a job with one of the big agencies?

SPIESMAN: There are a couple of different ways you can begin. You can start as a policeman. Most private investigators are retired cops who were doing investigating while in uniform. To get a license in this state as a private detective, you have to have three years experience as an investigator, and you get it by working with an agency, or for the police or a federal agency. You have to have a license to open up your own office.

MYSTERY: What kind of work did you do with Burns?

SPIESMAN: A lot of undercover work. My job was to go into a place—such as a factory, a warehouse, a hospital, or a hotel—and uncover whatever criminal activity was going on. Usually it was something specific that was suspected, like dealing in drugs. However, sometimes I was there just to collect general intelligence information, making sure that nothing illegal was in fact going on.

MYSTERY: When you're working undercover, how do you go about getting the job?

SPIESMAN: A lot of times the president of the company will see to it that you're hired with some excuse or another. The problem with that is then if some other higher-up is involved, like say a vice-president—that happened to me once—then everyone's going to know you're a detective, and you won't get anywhere. That's why when there's a serious criminal activity, you have to get yourself hired. That involves a lot of ability and trickery. You have to know the whole employment and personnel routine, how to get by people, how to answer the right questions, and how to devise a phony résumé.

MYSTERY: What's your procedure once you've been hired and have started work in the company?

SPIESMAN: First you have to see what's going on, whether in fact there is anything illegal. Then you have to start relating and becoming close with the people you think are involved with these activities. You have to win their confidence and gain their trust. You get into their personal lives, go to parties with them. Because I don't want them to know the truth about my personal life, I usually move into a motel. Eventually you work your way into their operation. Then ultimately you blow it apart.

When you're working undercover you have to have as much general knowledge as possible, so you can relate to a wide variety of people, and pass yourself off in all these different circumstances. You're an actor. Consequently everything you read and learn ends up being useful. That's why it's fascinating, and why I like the field. It gives me an excuse to study everything.

MYSTERY: Doesn't it cause a real conflict when you've developed what could amount to a genuine friendship with someone, and are then required to betray them?

SPIESMAN: You have that kind of conflict in this whole business. When you're in this field you have to have strong personal values. For better or worse, I've always been very principled. I have my values down to the point where I can cope with any potential conflict. If I know that what you're doing—say dealing in drugs—is hurting people, killing kids, and ruining lives, even though I might get to like you as a person, I'd have no compunction about turning you in and getting you off the street. I just cannot condone any kind of criminal activity that takes advantage of or hurts people. To me, that's the ultimate sin. Maybe it's because of my Ayn Randian objectivistic background, but I don't have any trouble finding right or wrong. I don't think there is any gray area. Anybody who does is deluding himself.

MYSTERY: This is interesting, because when you think of fictional detectives you realize they too are all equipped with solidly principled outlooks. Sam Spade, for example, in *The Maltese Falcon,* honoring his partner by rejecting the love of the woman who killed him. You're saying that kind of honor is necessary to be a detective?

SPIESMAN: It's necessary in order to be a good one. Unfortunately there are lots of people in the profession with the reputation for being sleazy, unprincipled, and corrupt.

MYSTERY: How many years all told did you spend with the big agencies?

SPIESMAN: About five years. I worked for several different agencies: Pinkerton, Burns, another outfit called MRA. I did mostly undercover work with Burns; and with Pinkerton I did general investigating.

MYSTERY: What kind of "general investigating" would a big company do as opposed to the cases you now have as an independent?

SPIESMAN: Most large companies don't take any kind of domestic work, and as a rule they don't do pretrial or civil litigation cases. They do mostly industrial investigations, security analysis, bodyguard work, and escort work.

MYSTERY: You see ads on television for courses in criminal investigation. How do you teach someone to be a private detective?

SPIESMAN: A lot of it is simple common sense, like when it comes to locating someone. However, there are definitely certain abilities that have to be developed in order to be a good detective. You have to be imaginative and flexible enough to pick up on certain things. You have to be observant enough to know and remember details. Most importantly, you have to

know how to talk to people. As a private detective, you often have to evaluate a person's character within minutes, and know exactly how to approach him. Like, for example, when you have to get a statement from a witness who doesn't want to talk. You don't have time to prepare yourself. All these qualities come from experience. In addition, there are technical abilities that you have to learn, like surveillance: moving, walking, and stationary surveillance. Following someone in a car, for example, is extremely difficult. It takes split second reflexes, and I know lots of professional investigators who won't touch it, because it's so hard. Also stationary surveillance. You've got to develop the discipline to look at a door for hours without taking your eyes off it for a second. That's all it takes—a second—for someone to come out of a door. You can blow your whole case in one second.

It also helps to find someone who's a good teacher. I learned a lot from a certain black detective I worked with. But I'm still looking for someone who can teach me more. I'd like to find a Nero Wolfe. I'd give up everything and go and work for him.

MYSTERY: Do you often use disguises when you're doing surveillance?

SPIESMAN: I use anything that helps me blend into the background. In a residential area, I might clip hedges or fix my car. You can't be obvious to your subject, or the neighbors either. I've had it happen when sitting in a car in the suburbs, waiting for someone to come out, that the housewives saw me, and next thing I knew, the cops were there. For that reason, residential surveillance is very difficult.

MYSTERY: Why did you decide to eventually go on your own?

SPIESMAN: When you're working in a large organization you have the problem of incompetence on higher levels. You don't want to work for someone incompetent, who's making decisions for your life, especially in this business, where your life is on the line. A colleague of mine almost got killed because of a mistake made by a superior. We were doing a bodyguard case, and he was with the subject in a situation where there were a lot of cops around. Because the cops hadn't been informed who he was, they thought he was a criminal, and he almost got his brains blown out.

MYSTERY: How long have you been on your own now?

SPIESMAN: Five years. Since 1972.

MYSTERY: What's the procedure for opening up your own office?

SPIESMAN: First you have to get a license. You have to pass an examination, and they also investigate your background. You can't have any convictions. Then, like I said earlier, in New York state you need three years of experience. It varies across the country.

MYSTERY: How do you go about getting clients?

SPIESMAN: That's the difficult part. When I first opened up, I had a partner, and we just sat around and played chess, waiting for the phone to ring. We even started to write a detective book. Of course we did all the preliminaries. You go around to all the insurance companies, and also introduce yourself to a lot of lawyers. Most people don't just pick a detective out of a hat. They chose one from recommendations.

MYSTERY: How many private detectives are there in New York City?

SPIESMAN: About nine hundred.

MYSTERY: Is there much competition among them?

SPIESMAN: Not if you're good, and have

developed a good reputation. I have about half a dozen lawyers who use me regularly, and also refer their friends to me. I don't have any problems any more. In fact I have more work than I can handle.

MYSTERY: I believe Lew Archer charges fifty dollars a day. Do you charge by the case, or also by the day?

SPIESMAN: I charge by the hour. Twenty-five dollars plus expenses. If I have to go out of town, I charge for my meals, hotel, everything related to the travel.

MYSTERY: What's the furthest you ever had to travel on a case?

SPIESMAN: I had one case in which I had to go to Europe.

MYSTERY: Do you have a specialty in the kinds of cases you handle?

SPIESMAN: I do mostly criminal and pre-trial work: locating witnesses, obtaining statements from witnesses, investigating the scene of the incident. The kind of work F. Lee Bailey hired numerous detectives to do in order to prepare for the Hearst trial.

MYSTERY: What about marital problems, like for example where a wife may suspect that her husband is cheating on her?

SPIESMAN: I only do domestic cases when I'm retained by a lawyer. Otherwise cases like that become a nuisance. Also, I don't enjoy them, and I only take the cases I like. Missing person cases, for example. I do a lot of them. There are two kinds of people who are missing. There are the people who have moved away and just not been seen for awhile, and whom you have to find for some reason. That requires one kind of preparation. Then there's the person who is actually hiding, running away. A lot of cases I get involve spouses running away with kids. Those are very difficult.

MYSTERY: What kind of cases do you like best?

SPIESMAN: The ones that offer a real challenge. Cases where a person I believe is innocent is being tried for a crime. I have to come up with evidence that will prevent a miscarriage of justice. That can be really rewarding.

I had a case where this poor black girl in Brooklyn was attacked by a couple of drunks. One of them stuck her with an ice pick. A gang of young blacks saw what was happening and came over and killed one of her attackers. The cops charged the girl with the homicide. Luckily her brother knew a lawyer, and the lawyer hired me. The case went on for almost a year. Fortunately our investigation came up with a witness whose testimony saved the girl from a twenty-five-year jail sentence. That's the kind of case that's exciting—when someone's life or liberty hangs in the balance.

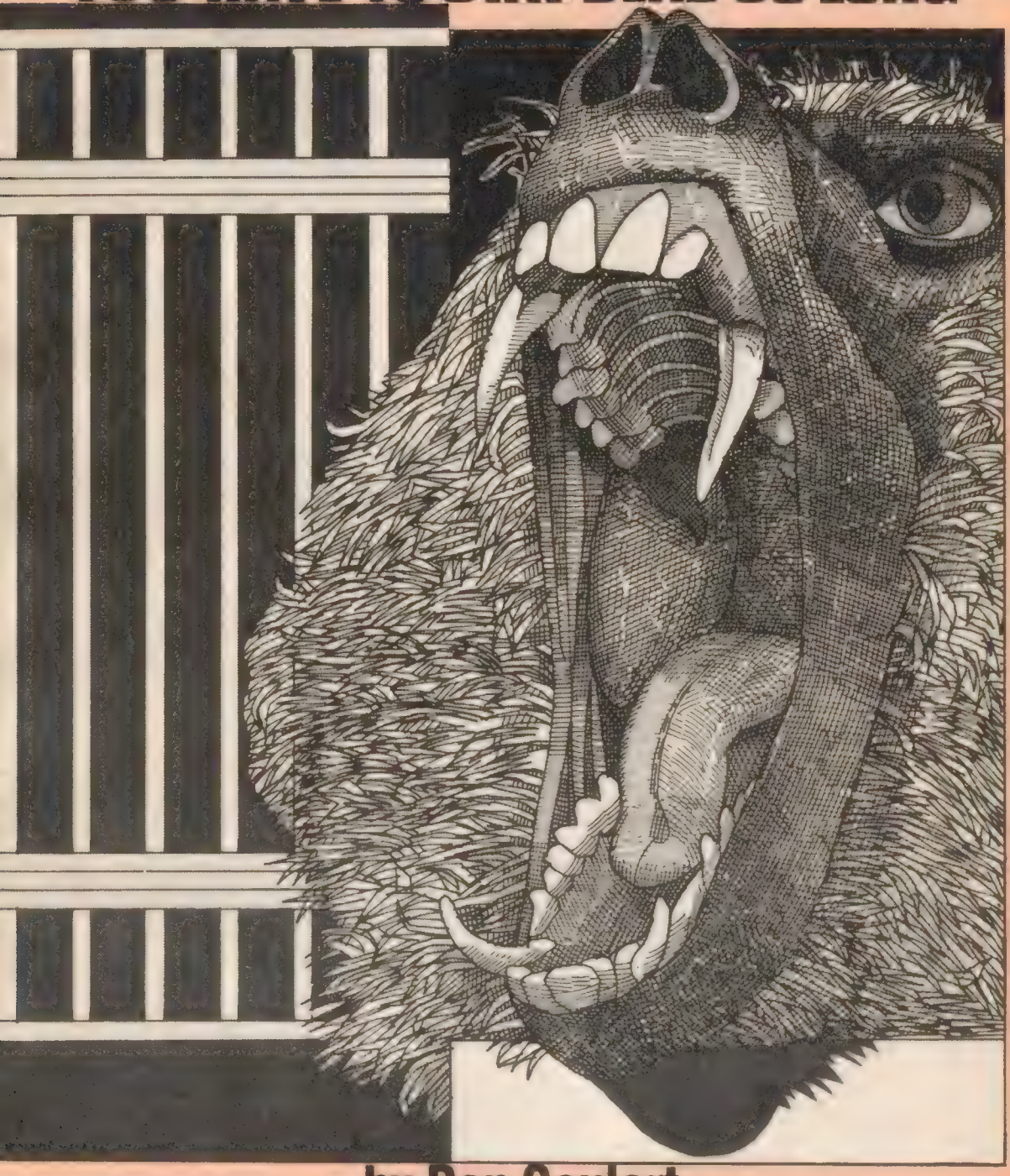
MYSTERY: Fictional detectives are often at odds with the police with whom they're often competing on a case. In real life are your relations with cops that strained?

SPIESMAN: Not really. Remember many private detectives are ex-cops. That's especially true now that so many cops are getting laid off.

MYSTERY: What do you enjoy most about being a detective?

SPIESMAN: The mystery and challenge of each case, and also the tremendous variety. Every day is different. Nothing is ever routine. Of course it means I put in long hours, and I don't have much private life. Also it's hard to find a woman who'll put up with my kind of schedule. However, for someone who's interested in everything, being a detective is a good life.

YOU HAVE TO STAY DEAD SO LONG



by Ron Goulart

John Easy had gone a few hundred feet into the forest when he encountered a lion. The lion watched him, wrinkling his nose. "Sit," Easy told it. The animal obeyed.

John Easy's client was wearing a four-hundred-dollar suit and a musky after-shave. A plump man of fifty-one, sitting very straight in the wrought-iron chair and frowning up at the hazy morning sky. "What do you think, Mr. Easy? Is it going to rain?"

"Not until after breakfast." The big, wide-shouldered private detective, thirty-two years old with mahogany-colored hair and a dark, knocked-around look, sat across the glass-top patio table from Stuart Hess.

Hess continued to scrutinize the sky above the Chateau Beverly, rubbing at his bald head. "Nobody wears a hat out here."

"Cowboy actors do," said Easy. "You want to hire me for something?"

"Precisely on the morning of my fiftieth birthday my hair commenced falling out. Cascading out," said Hess. "I don't like getting my head wet."

Easy tapped Hess' business card on the handle of the pewter coffeepot. "Hess & Prysock, Literary Agents, New York City," he read out loud. "Some sort of intellectual riddle you want solved?"

The plump literary agent rubbed his exposed head, bit carefully at the edge of his English muffin. "I want you to find a girl."

Easy asked, "Who?"

Glancing around the private patio, Hess wiped crumbs from his lips. "You were recommended to me as a man who can be discreet."

"I can. Who's the girl?"

"One of our authors. A very gifted young woman. Incredibly successful until. . . ."

Easy didn't try to guess what the rest of the sentence was. He sat, slightly slouched, watching Hess' face.

"Well, she became involved with a new style of life."

"When was this?"

Hess sighed, causing a tiny fleck of muffin to fly over into Easy's lap. "Lord, it was nearly two years ago. Laura had come out here to discuss the screen adaptation of one of her novels and she. . . . Well, Mr. Easy, she simply didn't go back to New York."

"What did she do instead?"

"She joined a . . . an experimental community. Not one of your grass-roots communes, not the sort of thing which became so popular a few years back. This was to be a community of intellectuals. It was called the Ark."

"Heard of it. Up in the San Amaro hills."

"Yes, that was where Laura's letters and manuscripts were postmarked."

"Her full name is—?"

"Oh, Laura Byrn. You've probably read her *Keep Up Your Bright Sword.*"

"Half of it," answered Easy. "She still at the Ark?"

"The Ark is defunct." Hess sighed once more. "We haven't heard from Laura for two months. Nor, which is part of the problem, have we seen the final chapters of *Swordlight in the Sky*, her latest historical. My partner and I are concerned, and so are Laura's publishers. They've advanced her twenty-five thousand dollars and all they have is two-fifths of a Regency romance."

"Last time you heard from her she was at the Ark?"

"Yes. We sent all letters and royalty checks to Laura there."

"Would you know which bank she used out here?"

Hess blinked. "It didn't occur to me to bring any of the canceled checks out west with me, Mr. Easy. I can have my partner——"

"We may not need them," Easy said. "The Ark went out of business, huh? Have you checked with the place?"

Hess lifted the lid off the marmalade jar and stared into it. "I have, Mr. Easy," he said finally. "Frankly, my experience with the survivors of the Ark venture is what prodded me to consult a private investigator."

"What happened?"

"Well, I couldn't get near the place. Yesterday afternoon I drove out there. Before I was more than a hundred yards from the door of the main building someone fired at me. A shotgun, I believe. Some weapon which sent a great many tiny bullets my way."

"A shotgun," confirmed Easy. "See who it was?"

"I did not," replied the agent. "Although I was informed that Dick Estrada, the founder of the Ark community, still resides there. I made several efforts to identify myself, to explain I was Laura's literary agent. That produced

only another blast from the weapon."

"You don't want to try the police?"

Hess shook his head. "There's already been some less-than-positive publicity about Laura's new way of life," he said. "I don't wish any further."

"Got a picture of her?"

"Why, her picture is on the back of all her book jackets."

"Got one of her books then?"

Hess looked across the patio. "With my luggage, yes. I brought several copies of *The Brave Man with a Sword*, her latest, to drop off with studio people. I can spare you one."

"I only need the jacket."

"Reading the novel might give you some insights into Laura's character."

Easy grinned and stood up. "I got all I need from the half a book I already read. . . . My fee is a hundred and fifty a day and expenses."

"Yes, that's fine. . . . You won't mind my saying, Easy, that I find you a little brusque, a little lacking in compassion?"

"No, I don't mind."

Hess' hand was hesitating inside his coat. "You come across a trifle too . . . *macho*."

Easy's grin remained. "You're only buying the outside, Hess," he said. "I'm not selling my insides. What I really am and what I really think and feel, that's not involved in any deal we can make. You want a girl found, I'll find her. You want literary criticism of her books, go down to the L.A. *Times* and hire Robert——"

"No, I do want to hire you, Easy. You come highly recommended."

Easy watched the agent's hand which was still inside the coat. "Two days in front," he said. "Three hundred dollars."

"Yes, of course." The hand came out holding a checkbook.

Easy drove up Cherokee Boulevard. The day was getting warmer, the overcast sky was a brighter yellow.

A freckled man in a sweat suit was standing near the only palm tree on the block. "The meaning of our existence is simple," he was shouting to no one. "We are put on this earth for one purpose, which is—" He stopped shouting all at once, and went jogging off.

"The meaning of life keeps eluding me," Easy said to himself and turned down the alley on his right. At the alley's end loomed a big brownstone warehouse. Its polished oak door bore a brass nameplate announcing "Hago-

pian." Easy knocked.

"Put your clothes on, put your clothes on," urged someone on the other side of the door. "Scoot out the back way. No, I don't want one more look. Depart."

Half a minute later the door opened. "Ah, John Easy," said Hagopian. "You saved me from a fate worse than . . . well, I can't think of what could be worse than the fate I already have, come to think of it."

Easy came into the warehouse and walked to the circle of Victorian furniture and rugs which made a kind of parlor amid the endless rows of filing cabinets in the high-ceilinged warehouse. "She left her bra."

"Somebody else's, Zooey doesn't wear a bra." Hagopian was a dark-haired, circle-eyed man a few days from forty. He had a hooked nose, tight-curling hair, and was wearing tennis shorts and one white sock. He kicked the discarded bra under a chair with his bare foot. "She came to show me her tits." He wandered over to the small refrigerator at the edge of the rug. "This is a very strange town, John."

"You're a tit man, what's so unusual?" Easy sat in a bentwood rocker.

"This girl was a total stranger. Somebody gave her my name and suggested, since I am a star reporter for *TV Look*, that I'd be able to help her. She's been showing her knockers all over town, with no results. Well, with no furthering of her career." Hagopian opened the icebox. "They're not bad tits, as tits go, but I like to lead up to viewing that sort of thing gradually."

"You're not too clothed yourself. Going someplace?"

New circles formed under Hagopian's eyes as he examined himself. "I think I'm either just coming back from a tennis date or going to one. This isn't Thursday, is it?"

"Not quite."

Hagopian handed Easy a bottle of German beer, took one himself. "Thursday afternoons I usually play tennis with my psychiatrist. Though lately I don't like the way he looks at me when I make a point." Hagopian searched for his other sock, gave up and sat on a love seat. "If you hadn't knocked I wouldn't have been able to send Zooey out of here. And I promised to be faithful to Yip."

"What is Yip, a new Eastern religion?"

"Ah, John, haven't I told you about her? Yip is the loveliest girl ever to trod the quake-prone ground of L.A. She's like a gentle . . . but you didn't come here to listen to my raptures."

Easy asked, "Ever hear of Laura Byrn?"

"The novelist?" Hagopian gestured at the rows of green filing cabinets causing his beer to foam. "I've got a whole fat folder full of material on her. In fact, I've got more stuff on her in my private morgue than the *Los Angeles Times* or——"

"I've been hired to find her."

An even greater number of rings framed the *TV Look* writer's eyes. "That's very interesting."

"Why?"

"She was living in a literary Shangri-la known as the Ark."

"Yeah, I know. Up in the hills above San Amaro beach."

"But do you know who else was living there?" Hagopian entered one of the corridors formed by the man-high cabinets.

Easy followed his friend. "Place was run by a guy named Dick Estrada. You mean him?"

"Not the poet, no." Hagopian halted, set his bottle aside and pulled out a drawer. "You've heard of the MacQuarrie Report?"

"Yeah, the Senate thing. MacQuarrie's committee investigated the intelligence agencies," said Easy. "Report was supposed to be secret, but it got leaked."

"Exactly," said the hawk-nosed Hagopian as he pulled a thick folder out of the open drawer. "One of the fringe benefits of the leak was the resurrection of Dr. Neil Grossel."

"He was the chemical-biological weapons guy, supposed to have died in a plane crash three years ago."

"Not so, however. Our benevolent government, which won't even allow me to deduct all the depreciation on the most comprehensive private morgue in goofyland . . . well, that same identical government arranged to make it look as though Dr. Grossel had departed this life. What they did was fake an accident, then give Grossel a new identity. They kept him out of the way until some of the troubles surrounding his more adventurous experiments cooled down." Hagopian took a clipping from the file, gave it to Easy. "There he is in the midst of his new life."

Easy studied the newspaper photo. It had been taken three months earlier. Showed a group of unaware people gathered around an outdoor charcoal *hibachi*. One of the five people in the photo was Laura Byrn. A lean, forty-year-old man had his arm around the girl's shoulder. "Reading from left to right Dick Estrada . . . blah . . . blah . . . Laura Byrn and Dr. Ira Chandler. He would be the not-so-dead Dr. Grossel, huh?"

"Yep. A photographer, from the *San Amaro Pilot,* of all papers, got up close to the Ark and got that with a zoom lens," explained Hagopian. "I imagine Dr. Chandler-Grossel went underground about the time that edition hit the fan."

"And so did Laura."

"A likely prospect," agreed Hagopian, rubbing at his sharp nose with an edge of the folder. "The Ark itself foundered a couple of weeks later, scattering the rest of the residents."

"Estrada is supposed to be there still," said Easy. "Repelling boarders with what sounds like a double-barreled shotgun."

"Ah, these poets," said Hagopian, "much more sensitive than us prose people. I bet Zooeys don't come around showing Dick Estrada unsolicited tits."

"I figured you could give me a list of the Ark group, with new addresses."

"With my morgue I can give you a list of just about anything, John," said Hagopian. "Your job is going to be easier this week than it would have been last."

"How so?"

"One of the Ark people, Bethel Tandy, the screenwriter, died last week." Hagopian extracted her obit from the Ark file.

"Yeah, I remember seeing this. Beaten to death, tortured, her house looted."

"Burglary's getting to be right up there with cancer as a major cause of death."

Easy folded and unfolded the death notice. "I wonder if somebody else is looking for Dr. Grossel and Laura. And thought Bethel Tandy knew where they were."

"Could be why Estrada is shooting at anybody who comes near." Tucking the folder under his arm, Hagopian went strolling down the aisle and around a bend. "The continuing existence of Dr. Grossel wasn't the only bean which got spilled by the MacQuarrie Report."

When Easy caught up with Hagopian the writer had another drawer tugged open. "Something about the experiments he did with government agents?"

"I started out with a folder labeled 'Government Screwups,' now it's a drawer and a half," said Hagopian. "Seems Dr. Grossel, before his death and transfiguration, tried out a new mind drug on a few alleged volunteers. Seems all the volunteers, at least according to what Senator MacQuarrie dug up, didn't exactly know they were volunteers. This particular drug had the nasty side

effect of causing the users to want to kill themselves. One of them jumped out of his hotel room in Manhattan. The Commodore, it was. Boy, if I was going to splatter all over the street I'd pick a better neighborhood. Have you been back East and seen Forty-Second Street lately?"

"I flew over it." Easy took the clipping. "Two guys at least killed themselves, Nils Spingarn and Arnold Petersen."

"Petersen had two boys, there's a picture of them. In their twenties now, kids in high school when he supposedly did the Dutch ten years ago. Mother died a year after."

"People still die of broken hearts?"

"What are you going to do? We can't seem to get rid of sentiment," said Hagopian. "Speaking of which, you haven't talked much about your recent sojourn in Spain. How was it?"

"Very Spanish."

The snarling black police dog came padding across the gravel at Easy. With a rumbling growl it leaped directly at him.

Easy pivoted out of its way, flashing the chunk of raw steak he'd bought just after learning he'd be facing a guard dog at this stop on his quest.

The rumbling black dog hesitated after landing, wide-legged, a few feet beyond Easy. Its eyes were on the steak.

Easy tossed it.

The dog snapped the meat out of the air, slapped it against the ground with one big paw and commenced chewing.

"Hey, I promised to bring him up as a vegetarian," called the man inside the ranch-style house.

From his pocket Easy pulled a coil of wire. He forced the dog's head down, hooked the wire to its collar and leaped back just as the bloody teeth snapped at him.

"You're going to hurt him. That's a very expensive dog." There was a man behind the sliding screen door which faced the pool area.

"Usually I just shoot them." Easy concentrated on tying the other end of the wire around the trunk of a decorative orange tree. "But—at least so they tell me—I'm getting more sentimental every day."

The dog was barking, growling, snarling, yowling. But it could no longer get at Easy.

The big detective kept clear of it and continued on his way to the house. "I'm John Easy, a private investigator. I'm looking for Laura Byrn."

The man behind the screen was pale, in his middle thirties, wearing a sea-blue terry jump suit. "I've got a gun, too. I'll use it should you come any closer."

Easy stopped, sat down in a green and white deck chair beside the swimming pool. "Who else you afraid of?"

"Taking sensible precautions isn't necessarily a sign of fear."

"You're Terry Katzman, aren't you?"

"I might be."

"Who else tried to talk to you about Laura Byrn or Dr. Grossel?"

"It's not Laura really . . . nobody, no one." Katzman's face pressed against the screen, making his nose flatten. "How'd you know I was here? I didn't think I left a trail from the last place."

"This used to be Bo Kinsky's place. I know somebody who knows Bo."

"God, there's no safety in this world anymore. I barely get my things moved in when you. . . ." Katzman shook his head, rasping at the screen. "First the bottom drops out of my scripting career, then you hoods try to. . . . You'll have to go away, Mr. Easy."

"Someone else tried to talk to you. Who was it?"

"I got away from them. They don't know I'm here."

"More than one? Two? Three guys?"

"I don't want to talk about it."

"Were they looking for Chandler, for Dr. Grossel?"

"I'm either going to shoot you or call the police, Mr. Easy. I can charge you with assaulting my dog."

"If I find Laura and Grossel first I can keep these guys from hurting them," Easy said towards the gray screen. He noticed a lone sea gull walking along the slanting rile roof. "Otherwise more people are going to end up like Bethel Tandy."

The screen shook as Katzman let out his breath. "I knew poor Beth's murder wasn't just a. . . . God, when things start going bad they really go. First they cancel *Outpost* and then I lose the *Swann's Way* scripting job." He slid the screen a few inches open to point a .32 revolver out at Easy. "I've written a lot of cop shows, Easy. I can use this."

Easy poked his tongue into his cheek, watched the sea gull, who seemed to be having a balance-center trouble. "Okay. I'm John Easy, office on the Strip. It's better to talk to me than to them."

"I'm not planning to talk to anyone," said Katzman. "I may, though, bill you if that damn dog gets sick."

The dog snarled when Easy passed it this time.

Dick Estrada went to the cottage curtains again, looked out at the afternoon. "I'm glad you came by, Easy," he said. "All sorts of odd people have been lurking the past couple of weeks."

On his knees, Easy was beside the bed he'd shoved aside. "Telling me where Laura is would probably cut down on the lurking problem."

"I really don't know where they are," said the bearded poet. "Believe me, I'd tell you if I did. When you told me you were a close friend of my attorney's, and I confirmed that, I let you right in, didn't I?"

"Right, you only used one barrel of the shotgun on me."

"That was before you identified yourself. My security is important to me, Easy, very important." Estrada was still carrying the shotgun. "I know someone killed Bethel because of this Dr. Grossel business. And I know he and Laura Byrn are together someplace, but I have no idea where. He seemed so in tune with what we were trying to do here. It sounds trite . . . but we really did have a community of scholars here. A dozen people of intelligence who got along together, who could work and have fun together."

Easy stretched to pick up something which had fallen under the bed in the cottage Laura Byrn and the man who'd called himself Ira Chandler had shared. "Most murders take place in the home; living together doesn't make you immune to violence."

Estrada was at the half-open doorway, staring out at the hot hazy forest of pines which surrounded the Ark's five acres. "I'm very afraid of death. A terrible thing to admit."

"Everybody's afraid of dying." Easy was studying the snapshot he'd found. It showed Laura Byrn standing in front of a tumble-down wooden building and in the background were two camels. The countryside was dry and yellow.

"Do you think so? I'm not certain. Do you know Negro folk music at all? There's a fine old blues hymn with a line in it: 'I wouldn't mind dying, but you have to stay dead so long.' That's the terrifying part. To live so short a time and to be dead for. . . . I don't suppose you're familiar with the song?"

"Only on the Blind Willie Johnson record." Easy held the photo out to the poet. "Know where this was taken?"

"No," Estrada said. "Chandler probably took it, someplace they went together. He never let anyone take pictures of him, somewhat like a primitive tribesman who's afraid of losing his soul. She was very pretty, wasn't she?"

"Was?"

"Is, I mean."

Easy put the photo into a pocket of his sport coat. "Is," he said.

"I know you," said the chunky woman who wasn't quite blond anymore. She was leaning with both elbows on the glass-top counter.

"Probably explains why you're the only person I've talked to today who hasn't aimed some kind of gun at me." Easy stepped all the way out of the glaring afternoon and into the shadows of the narrow shop. "You're Mabel Trice, aren't you?"

She stubbed out her cigarette in an abalone-shell ashtray, wiped her palms along the front of her flowered smock. "Every once in a while I'm tempted to say no. What's the use, though? And you're John Easy."

"That's right. I'm looking for——"

"I know who you're looking for. Dick just phoned me," said Mabel Trice. "But I'd heard of you before that, John Easy. I'm a very enthusiastic true-crime buff. Did some writing in that area, before I sent my muses packing, bailed out of the Ark, and went into the flotsam business." The many thin silver bracelets on her thick wrists jangled as she gestured at the shop around her.

Easy surveyed, quickly, the various displays of driftwood and seashells. "A beachcomber's delight," he said. "How come you're not afraid, like the other Ark alums?"

"Because I couldn't stand that freeze-dried bitch Laura," replied Mabel. "Nor her no-balls lover, Chandler or Grossel or whatever he's calling himself today." She shook her head, jangling big silver earrings. "Laura would never tell me where she moved to, and anybody who's hunting for her has probably found that out."

"Nobody's approached you till me?"

"Not a soul. I figure they got something out of poor Bethel. Not a location, but a run-down on who'd be the best source of info about our wayward lady artiste."

"Who are the best sources?"

"Oh, Tony Katzman. He carries the torch, if anyone says that anymore, for Laura. Tony'd do anything to help her, even provide a place for her and her boyfriend to shack up." She lit, with more jangling, a fresh cigarette. "Seven friends of mine have died of cancer this year, but I can't seem to quit. I suppose cancer's a better way to die than the way Bethel went, do you think?"

"Staying alive is better," said Easy. "Does Katzman know where

Amanda is?"

"It's a good bet. You talk to him?"

"Yeah, Katzman and his guard dog. Got nothing."

"He's not very courageous." Mabel watched the burning end of her cigarette for a few seconds before snuffing it in the big seashell. "You've been a private investigator quite a long time, haven't you?"

"A few years." Easy backed off, glanced at the door.

"You were a cop before?"

He nodded. "Yeah, up in San Francisco."

"More money in private-eye work, huh?"

"No, more money in being a cop," Easy answered, "but it was the wrong kind. So I quit and migrated south."

The chunky woman studied him. "You know, I bet you're a native son. Don't see them once in a blue moon, if anybody says that anymore. I get the feeling you were born right here in California."

"Yep, in Watsonville."

Mabel laughed. "Come on, you're no small-town boy."

"No, not anymore." He moved closer to the door.

"You were mixed up in a murder right here in San Amaro a few months back. I remember reading——"

"A few blocks from here. Okay, thanks for talking to me."

"What about that actress? I remember something in the columns. You and a stunning young blonde . . . Jill Jeffers. That's her name. Are you and Jill Jeffers still an item, if anyone says that anymore?"

"Jill's in Paris, making a movie." His big, weathered hand caught the doorknob. He went out into the bright afternoon.

The girl looked very attractive upside-down.

Easy stood in the doorway of his private office, staring out into his reception room. The drapes had been pulled open and people and sports cars were flashing by out on Sunset Strip.

"Mr. Easy?" inquired the upside-down girl, who was standing on her head next to the secretary's desk.

"Is Nan still down with the flu?" Easy asked.

The girl, who had red hair and whose breasts were flapping under her candy-striped tank top, righted herself, smoothed her white duck trousers, and smiled at him. "Yes, I'm your temporary secretary sent over from Misspower. My name is Yip."

"You know Hagopian?"

"I don't believe so. Should I?"

"You must be a different Yip. Any messages?"

The redhead felt at the desk top. "A Mr. Stuart Hess called. And a Mr. Terry Katzman."

"Katzman? What'd he want?"

"Said it was urgent. That's all. Wants you to pay another visit, soon as you can."

"When did he call?"

"At three, an hour ago."

"If Hess phones again, tell him no progress."

"Isn't that, you'll pardon my mentioning, sort of negative, Mr. Easy?"

"Why were standing on your head?"

"It's good for you."

"Right." Easy headed for the parking lot behind the building.

Two black men in white coats were frowning down at the dead dog.

"That's a mothering shame," said one of them. "Some dude killing a dog like this."

"This is a fine dog, too. Mean, you know, if you understand what I'm saying. Police dogs are mean. That's why they call them police dogs."

"I had one once bit a big healthy chunk out my——"

"Hey, you butts! Get that stretcher in here." A plainclothes cop was standing on Terry Katzman's patio. The screen stood wide open now. "I want to keep him alive."

"What kind of guy would kill a dog?" The ambulance man and his partner went on into the house.

Easy stepped over the dog, avoiding the spill of blackening blood near the dead animal's throat. "Afternoon, Lieutenant Sillman."

Sillman was kicking bits of twig into the blue pool with his scruffy brown shoes. A short heavy-faced man of fifty-one in an eight-year-old suit. "John Easy," Sillman said in a neutral voice.

"Katzman the victim?"

"Katzmans always are," replied the lieutenant. "Worked over, tortured, still alive. Burned his hands and feet, kicked him a lot."

"Can he talk?"

"Enough to call for help. Out cold now."

"He say who got at him?"

"Pair of young guys, no description. You're here because—?"

"Katzman called me, about two hours ago."

"You make house calls now?"

"When I'm trying to find out something."

"About what?"

"Somebody I'm looking for."

"Lads who got here ahead of you were maybe looking for the same someone."

"Maybe." Easy went into the house.

Most of the furniture was toppled. Katzman, breathing jerkily through his broken nose, was being lifted onto the stretcher. His face and arms were polka-dotted with raw burned spots.

Returning a licorice-colored Lucite chair to its feet, Easy sat down and surveyed the room. On the wall over the deep fireplace was a large framed photo smaller than whatever had hung there before. It showed a younger Katzman and three camels and a giraffe standing by a long low adobe house. Easy got up and approached the picture.

The lettered caption below the photo read, "Katzman's Animal Farm, August, 1951."

"Long time ago." Easy found the phone on the floor between two loitering uniformed cops. He picked it up and dialed Hagopian.

"Don't hang up again, Yip," answered Hagopian. "I might be able to change my views on Est."

"This is Easy. Is Yip a redhead?"

"She wasn't yesterday. I haven't seen her today since we're——"

"What's 'Katzman's Animal Farm'?"

"It has nothing to do with my lovelorn condition," answered the *TV Look* writer. "Used to be a thriving supplier of animals for movies and television. Belonged to the father of one of those guys you had on your Ark list. I hear it's considerably run-down now, with a few tacky old animals roaming free and some old coot playing watchman. That's the way it is in wackytown, John. One day you're the most sought-after chimpanzee in Hollywood and then it's all over."

"So I hear. Where is the place?"

"Out in the valley." Hagopian gave him the San Fernando address.

"Thanks for the information."

"What information? asked Lieutenant Sillman as Easy hung up.

"An address," said Easy.

"Who you hunting, Easy?"

"A girl."

"That's your specialty. Who is she?"

"My client would prefer the world not know."

"Your client know anything about why somebody beat the shit out of Katzman?"

"Nope." Easy moved for the way out.

"Do you?"

"Might be they wanted the same address I did. That's only a hunch."

When he passed the dead dog again the two ambulance men were stopped beside it. The unconscious Katzman was moaning and tossing on the stretcher.

He heard the shooting just after he saw the old zebra go loping away through the twilight.

Easy swung his Volkswagen off the dusty back road, parked it among a stand of walnut trees, and eased out.

Now, as he moved quietly into the fading woods, he held a .38 revolver in his right hand.

He had gone a few hundred feet into the forest when he encountered a lion.

The lion watched him, wrinkling its nose.

"Sit," Easy told it.

The animal obeyed. It lowered itself, tail swishing, to the mossy ground.

Bending low, Easy continued on.

Three more shots sounded up ahead.

He looked and saw them in the twilight, at a distance of several hundred yards. Two young men, each with a hunting rifle, crouched behind the sheds and small barns which faced the big adobe house at the center of the flat and dusty acres of Katzman's Animal Farm. They must be the Petersen boys, Easy figured. The sons of the man who'd killed himself ten years ago.

"Revenge is a fine old motive," Easy told himself. He worked his way to the edge of the woods, still hidden by trees.

"Sooner or later, Grossel," shouted one of the blond young men, "we're going to get you. You got no phone, no way to get help. Come on out!"

"Maybe we let the girl go," added his brother, sending a shot at a front window of the main house. Sparkles of glass were spilled all around the front of the place; all the windows were broken and jagged.

Behind the house were several old animal cages, most with doors hanging open and askew. In one of the few locked cages a very ancient baboon was

screaming and throwing himself at the rusty bars.

Easy moved as silently as he could.

"Nobody knows you're here, Grossel!"

"Except Katzman. And he's not going to tell anybody else!"

Three more shots tore at the house, smashing more glass, splintering the wooden front door.

The Petersens were on high ground and could see the back as well as the front of the adobe house. If Grossel or Laura Byrn tried to get out the rear way they'd be spotted. The animal farm was isolated. No other houses or ranches were within half a mile.

Judging by the Porsche parked out near the animal cages Grossel and Laura were inside for sure. The Petersens must have established that before they began their siege.

A shot came out of the house. Someone in there with a handgun, and not a very good shot. Grossel was an expert with more sophisticated weapons, apparently.

Easy had got himself up behind the two Petersens. He watched them for a moment. One boy was using a storage shed as a shield, the other was nearer the main house, hunched at the edge of a small horse barn.

Easy took a deep breath and left the protection of the woods. He walked for the nearest Petersen.

The young man never heard Easy until the big detective's .38 was poking into his back. "Step back and set down the rifle," Easy quietly ordered.

The blond young man stiffened. "Randy!" he managed to shout before Easy tugged him out of sight of his brother.

Easy chopped the rifle out of the boy's grip.

"Bastard!" Petersen charged him.

Sidestepping, Easy swung on him with the hand holding the revolver.

The boy's jaw made a tremendous clicking sound before he fell, hitting with a loud thwack into the wall of the wooden shed. He dropped, unconscious, to the ground, sending up a splash of dust.

Suddenly Easy felt he ought to throw himself down. A rifle bullet went sizzling through the dusk where he'd just been.

Bracing himself, Easy fired.

The .38 slug dug into the other Petersen's arm before he could use the rifle again.

"Lucky government bastard," muttered the young man, kneeling, gripping his bleeding arm.

Easy gathered the rifles under his arm and went walking downhill to the adobe house.

The ruined door opened, a lean bearded man with a pistol stared out. "What organization are you with?" asked Dr. Grossel.

"Just a concerned citizen," Easy told him. "Is Laura Byrn in there?"

"That's no concern of yours. You've saved me from a crazed attack, I'm most appreciative. Now I have to be moving on to——"

"If it were only you," Easy said evenly, "I wouldn't have stopped them." He came right up to the doctor. "I don't want Laura Byrn getting killed."

Grossel watched him for a few seconds more before slamming the door.

Easy ran around the big house and got to the cage area just as Grossel and Laura had settled into the Porsche. The motor came to life with a growl, setting the old baboon to screaming again.

The car went fifty feet before Easy shot a tire. It squealed, spun, and rammed into the side of an empty cage. The cage groaned and fell over and the Porsche tangled with the skeleton bars and stopped dead.

Easy pulled the girl out of the car, let Dr. Grossel extricate himself. "You'd better be Laura Byrn," he said.

She brushed back her hair, answering, "Yes, I am. Who sent you?"

"Stuart Hess."

Laura said, "That's very thoughtful. You saved our lives, I suppose. However, I don't think I'm ready to go back to work. Neil . . . that's Doctor Grossel. . . ." She was watching the bearded man struggle out of the battered car. "Neil and I are going to Mexico, where we should have gone in the first place."

"I don't think quite yet," said Easy. "There's been a murder, an attempted murder, and several assaults. I think you're going to talk to the police."

"The police won't have to know anything about us if you don't——"

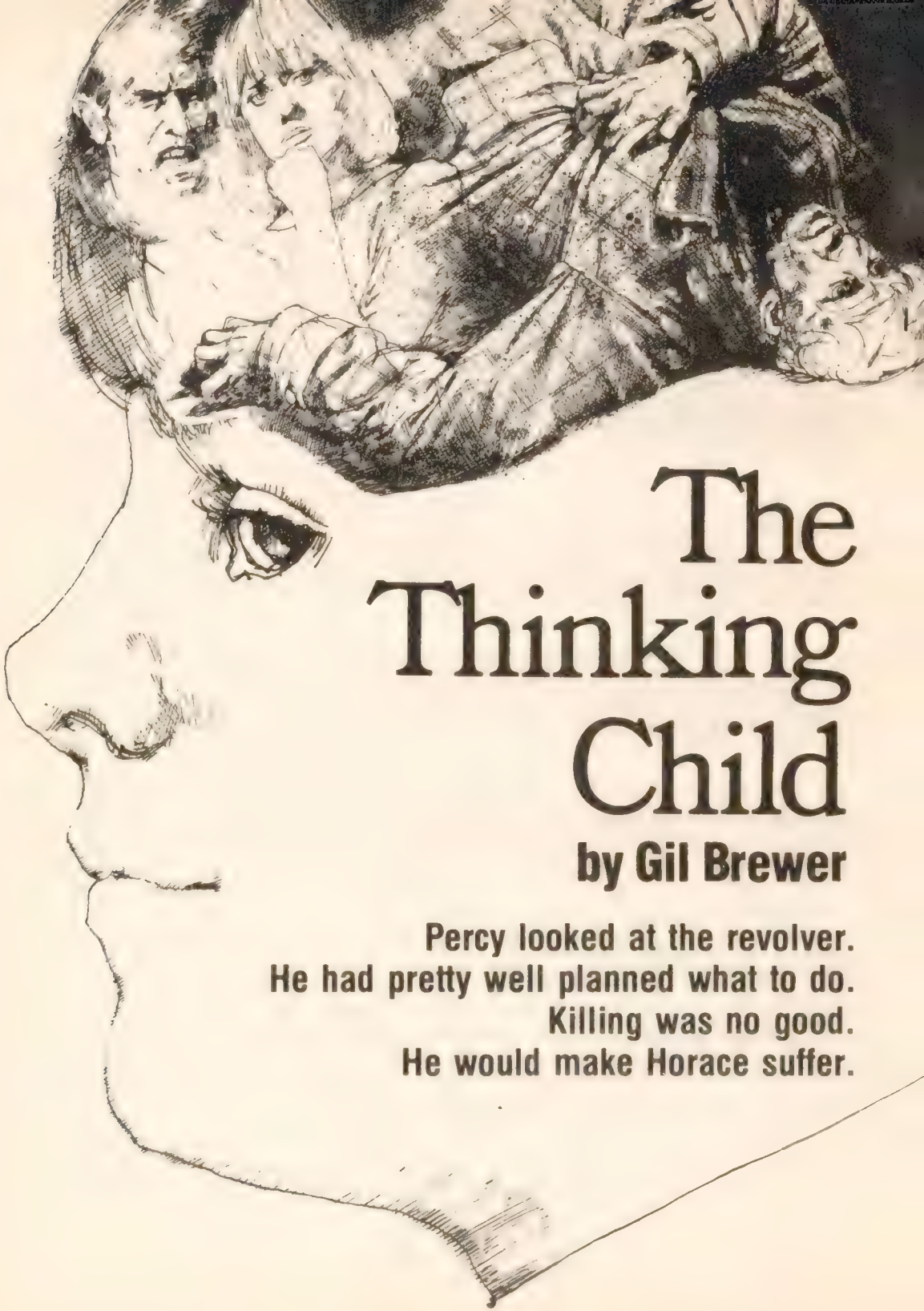
"But I'm not going to keep quiet." Easy grinned at her.

The girl made a sad sound. "Very well," she said. "I'll talk to them. And I'll talk to Stuart, too. I hope I can convince him there are more important things in the world than novels. You understand what I mean, don't you?"

"Sure." Easy put his gun back in its holster.

"Those two young men, the way they tried to kill us," she said. "What's wrong with people like that?"

"They're too sentimental," answered Easy. Then he went over and watched the unhappy baboon.



The Thinking Child

by Gil Brewer

Percy looked at the revolver.
He had pretty well planned what to do.
Killing was no good.
He would make Horace suffer.

"Just don't give me any lip!"

"I would never do that, Daddy."

"And don't, for the love of God, call me that. I can't stand it from you."

His face was quite red. He stood there, towering above me, glaring. I wouldn't have put it past him to strike me. He had struck me before with less justification.

"You'll call me Horace, you hear? That's my name, and I don't care what Gloria says to the contrary. Now, why did you break my pipe?"

"It simply dropped," I said. "I was trying to clean it for you, and it slipped from my hand."

"I suppose you're sorry, too?"

"Yes, quite sorry."

When I said that I was certain he would strike me, but he didn't. I knew he had high blood pressure, and I had often hoped it would carry him away. I knew, of course, that such a thing couldn't be depended upon. So I'd been giving a lot of thought to more certain ways of disposition.

He leaned low, and stared me in the eye. I looked straight back at him, not showing any of the hate, just blinking slowly, well mannered as usual.

"You're a monster," he said. "I know what you think of me, and that goes double for you. Understand?"

"Perfectly, Daddy."

His eyes enlarged somewhat. "I'll get you," he said, whispering it. "I don't give a damn if you are only eight years old, Percy. You're not my child, get it? I'll have no compunctions. I didn't want you here. It's all Gloria's fault." He took a deep breath and straightened. "I don't care what they said about you at the Children's Home. And I'll snarl up those adoption papers. They won't go through. You grasp what I'm saying?"

"Mother will see that I stay here," I said.

"Don't call her that!"

"Well, I won't call her 'Mother' in front of you, if it hurts so much."

I was being very cool about this. I knew it maddened him when I revealed no emotion.

"You little twerp," he said. "I'll snatch you baldheaded one of these days."

Gloria entered the living room just then. She was quite pretty in a plump blond sort of way, with big brown eyes. She wore a green silk dress that showed off her figure.

"What are you doing, Horace?"

"I'm giving this little twerp, this brat, a warning. That's what I'm doing."

She looked at me and bit her lip. I made my eyes very soft and blinked at her, smiling faintly. That always got to her. Of course it wasn't difficult, because I really wanted her to like me. I knew with Horace out of the way, everything would be fine.

She moved over beside me, patted my shoulder. "It's all right, Percy. Now run along to your room."

I squeezed her arm. "Yes, Mother."

"Oh God," Horace said.

I ran from the room and up the stairs, making lots of thumps. I slammed my door, then opened it quickly and tiptoed back to the stairs, went halfway down, and listened.

"Gloria. I won't stand for this."

"You've got to stand for it."

"He smashed my pipe."

"You have others."

Horace groaned. "You don't seem to understand, Gloria. I'm beyond the fundamentals now. I tried to get you to give him back to the state——"

"And I explained I could never do that. What would the people at the home think? Especially after I fought so hard for Percy. I see some of them every day. They question me about him. You know what they thought of him at the home, Horace. I'd be ashamed. I could never face any of them again. The adoption will go through, Horace, just as planned."

There was a long pause, and then I heard him groan.

She said, "Percy will come around. Give him a chance. I'm sure he likes you, and you'll eventually come to like him. He'll be your son, Horace. Just think."

"It gags me to think that. Here, let me fix you a drink. . . ."

I knew there was no point listening now. I returned to my room and sat on the edge of the bed in the dark, thinking. They would have their drinks, and she would listen to what he told her. But nothing would change. At least, she would not return me to the home. She would lose face if she did. She was very social minded.

I got up and went into their bedroom, opened the drawer to a nightstand, and looked at the revolver. I had pretty well planned what I would do. Killing him was no good. I would make him suffer. He had struck me too many times. He cursed me. He hated me. He was a mean person, with absolutely nasty overtones.

Back in my room I sat on the bed some more. I could just faintly hear them down there, arguing. I couldn't bear animosity in a home. I had sensed it immediately when I'd come here four months ago.

I went to the window and looked out at the snowy night. The last remnants of winter. It was sad, somehow.

The psychiatrist at the home had told me I might have trouble adjusting.

"You're eight years old, Percy," he said. "But you are curiously endowed. You have the mind of an adult. It happens sometimes. The trouble is, true adults can't accustom to this fact. You're a sort of prodigy, Percy. I know you read a great deal, far beyond your age." He shook his head. "I'm afraid you'll find things rather trying."

He was right, of course.

They didn't want to understand me. Horace shouted at me the first day when I spilled milk on his lap. Two days later he struck me. I'd left the door open. Signs, you see? Definite pointers.

Now we had reached an impasse. He was desperate. He might do anything. I wouldn't give him the chance.

Next day, after school, I went round to different houses seeing the neighbors. I let them know that Daddy hated Mr. Slocum. I told how they had fought over Mr. Slocum borrowing a snow shovel. "Daddy says he can't stand it," I told them. "He says he's going to do something." I was very grim. "He swears awfully, and gets red in the face, and hits the table." I built it up everywhere as much as possible.

It was three-thirty when I got home, and I waited for Mr. Slocum to walk by the front of the house. He always came by every day. He said it was his constitutional. I had chosen Mr. Slocum because he once said to me, "If you ever leave your sled in my drive again, buster, I'll warm the seat of your pants."

He had tripped over my sled in the dark. He meant what he said, but he should never have said it.

I was out front, playing in the snow. He came walking along then, and I ran to him. "Mr. Slocum, Daddy wants to see you in the house."

"Oh, it's you, kid. What for?"

I shook my head. "He said to hurry."

Mr. Slocum wore a red Mackinaw, and he was on the old side. His face was gray, and he had long gray hair that blew in the wind.

We went into the house.

"In the den," I said. "Through the living room."

"Horace?" he called, walking into the den.

I picked up the revolver from the table behind the couch, and followed him into the den.

"He's not here, kid. Where is he?"

"He's at work," I said. "So's Mother. They both work."

Then he saw the gun in my hand, and took a step towards me, frowning.

I drew the gun up and began pulling the trigger. I pulled it five times, and he threw up his arms, trying to ward off the bullets. He was stupid, really. He yelled something and fell on the floor. I looked at him for a minute, then went back to the living room.

Now she would really be my mother.

I wiped the revolver carefully on a drape, laid it down, and put on my mittens with the string that goes around the neck. Gloria made me wear them. I picked up the gun and took it over by the door and laid it on the floor, and went outside to wait.

When Horace came home, he just glared at me in the yard. He put the car in the garage, went to the door, and entered. I came in behind him.

"Don't follow me," he said nastily.

"Oh, look, Daddy," I said. I picked the revolver up in mittened hands and stared at it. "A gun."

He snatched it away and started for the den. I went to the phone. "Don't kid me," he said over his shoulder. "I know damn well you put it there. Soon as I get my coat off, we'll come to terms."

He always went into the den first.

I picked up the telephone and dialed police headquarters, and right then Horace shouted something, and came running into the living room with the gun.

"Come to Five-Seven-Five Cymbal Court," I quickly told the man who answered. "There's been a murder, or something. It's terrible. It's Mr. Slocum. Daddy's here. Please, hurry." I hung up and looked at Horace.

His face was almost purple. "It's Slocum," he said. "He's dead—in my house!"

"I phoned the police, Daddy."

He advanced on me, staring at me. "Did you see anybody come in here?"

"I was playing with Johnny."

He didn't seem able to speak. Johnny DuPont was a stupid boy who lived on the block, but I kept him on the list because he had a hand grenade in the garage. His father had brought it back from Vietnam, and Johnny had filched it,

and we used to look at it together in the garage.

"My God," Horace said, and right then I heard the siren, whining in the distance, coming nearer. "This is my gun," he said. He looked awed now.

"Did you kill him, Daddy?"

He hit me on the ear for that, and I ran into the dining room. He started after me, holding the gun, but I heard a screech outside, and footsteps approaching the house.

Well, there was a time of it. Horace kept denying he had anything to do with the murder of Mr. Slocum, but one of the officers asked if it was his gun, and Horace said, "Yes," and meanwhile other officers were checking with the neighbors, and more police cars came, and an ambulance, and the crime lab truck. The neighbors told the police what I'd told the neighbors earlier in the day, and they took Horace away. Gloria was just coming in, and she was shocked, and began weeping. But she would get over it. I would comfort her.

"Son," an officer said to me. "Did you hear any shots—I mean, big noises?"

"Oh," I said. "I know what shots are. Yes, I heard five shots. I was playing with Johnny."

"You see anybody?"

"Well, no—only Daddy."

Horace gave me a terrible look from the back of a police cruiser, and everybody drove off, except they left a man to guard the house. They took Mr. Slocum away on a stretcher. He was covered with a gray blanket, and some of his hair floated in the wind where his head wasn't quite hidden.

That night Gloria cried a lot, and I tried to comfort her. "We'll be together," I said, "the way it was meant to be."

She looked at me. "I don't understand you, Percy."

"It's all right, Mother," I said.

And I was pretty happy about the whole thing, and then about nine-thirty a car drove up, and Horace came in the door, looking grim.

"Oh, my God," Gloria said. "It's you."

I heard the car drive away and I looked out the door and they had taken the guard away, too.

Horace was staring at me with a puzzled look now. He said, "They let me go. They said it was all a mistake. But they're baffled about why Slocum was in the house. They think a transient did it."

"But—it was your gun," Gloria said.

"Yeah. Only, even though my prints were on it, they know I didn't do it.

When old Slocum was killed, he must've thrown up his arms to protect himself. A slug struck his watchband, stopping his watch at three-forty-two. That saved me. I was still at the office. They checked, of course. And then they found a neighbor who had heard the shots and happened to remember the time."

"Mother," I said. "I think I'll go to bed now."

"Oh, Percy. Isn't it wonderful?"

"Yes. Daddy was quite lucky."

Horace kept watching me, frowning. I went to bed.

Late that night I woke up, and he was standing there in the dark, with the light from the hall at his back. Looking at me. I pretended sleep. He stood there a long time, then he said softly, "You brat, I'm going to fix your clock." Then he went away.

Four nights later, I was on the stairs listening to them. He was pouring her drinks, and he kept at her with a bright new idea. I stayed there, because I wanted to hear it all.

"Only over the weekend," he said. "You've got to agree, Gloria. When the kid comes back, I promise to try to understand him. Right now I can't bear the sight of him. He's a monster, and you won't see it."

"Yes, but—Horace——"

"I'm telling you, if we don't do this, something worse will happen."

There was a long pause. "Well," she said. "If it's only for the weekend, and you'll be sure there's plenty of food?"

"Certainly."

They both had been drinking a lot, I could tell.

He said, "I'll take him to the cottage tomorrow afternoon. I'll come home early, and get him just after school, see? You'll be working. I'll stick him in the basement room and lock the door. When you come home at five, our weekend will begin. He'll be fine, Gloria." His voice rose. "I've got to be able to be with you, like before. This weekend will mean everything."

"And we'd go get him Monday morning?"

"Yes. And you'll see, I'll be different."

"Well, I'm trying to think of your welfare, Horace. But I've got to think of Percy, too."

He didn't speak. I knew what he was thinking.

"It's a dirty trick," she said, and hiccuped. But I blessed her for thinking like that. Then she said, "All right. We'll do it. But just for the weekend."

"Oh, Gloria," Horace said. "I love you."

"Guess what!" she said.

"What?"

"It's a surprise I was saving. I didn't tell you at first, because I know how you feel about Percy. But now you're going to try, Horace——"

"What're you getting at?"

"The adoption went through. They notified me this afternoon. Percy's our legal son now."

I expected an explosion. There was nothing. Just silence. Then he quietly said, "Hand me the bottle, Gloria."

I turned and tiptoed back up the stairs, went to my room, and dressed. Then I sneaked down the back stairs, and got my jacket and galoshes, and left by the back door.

It took me two hours to walk to the cottage on the lake. It was rather chilly, and light snow was blowing. I got in a window and took matches from the kitchen, then went downstairs into the basement room. There were tools in the workshop, where Horace fashioned lopsided bookcases and stuff during the summer. All the time, I was thinking very hard. There had to be a way, and it mustn't be obvious. I laughed a little at that, because Horace was really rather stupid.

I fixed the lock on the basement room so I could take it right out and open the door, and nobody would notice.

After putting the tools back, I started home. There was ice on the road, and my galoshes made a lot of noise. I dodged behind trees when cars came by. But I couldn't think of anything.

Then it came to me.

When I got to our block, I slipped behind the houses and went to Johnny DuPont's garage. They never locked the door. I found the hand grenade, and took it home with me. In my room, I hid it under the bed.

The rest of the night I worked on how I'd manage.

At breakfast they were both a little self-conscious, and kept giving each other sly looks. And Horace kept kissing Gloria. It was disgusting.

"I've got a surprise for you," Horace said. "I'll meet you here right after school. We're going for a ride together."

"Oh, Daddy—that's quite thoughtful of you."

He eyed Gloria. I thought she looked nervous, but she smiled at me, and winked at Horace. Well, just the same, I felt sure she'd be all right after he was gone.

I went to school, and at noon I told the teacher I was ill. She checked with

Mr. Downing, the principal, and I went home.

There was plenty of time. I got a hammer and stuff, and fixed two hooks, one at the top of the door, and the other on the top jamb. They were very strong, and I made them just perfect. Then I took the ladder and tools back to the utility room.

How would I get up there when the time came?

I checked, and the big chair by the living room entrance would suffice.

I waited for Horace.

He came and we went to the car. I waited till he was behind the wheel, then I said, "I've got to go to the bathroom. I'll only be a minute."

He was so happy, he didn't care. He handed me the key to the front door, and I went into the house. I ran to my room, got the hand grenade, came down, and fastened it to the hooks on the door, standing on the chair. When the door was pushed open, the grenade's pin would pull out, and it would blow him up. I put the chair back, and went out the side door and ran around to the car.

"Just a little drive out to the cottage," he said. "We'll have great times there next summer."

"That's wonderful, Daddy."

Then he began to change. Not much, just a little, but it got worse the nearer we came to the lake. He kept making cracks. "Maybe you'd like to go away for a long time," he said, and laughed nastily.

"What do you mean, Daddy?"

"Oh, nothing."

He kept it up like that. When we reached the cottage, he took a box from the back seat of the car, and we went inside.

"I want to show you something downstairs," he said. His eyes were bright. He was very eager. "Come along, Percy."

We went into the basement, and he opened the door to the basement room and said, "Come inside, Percy."

He set the box on the floor. "There's food and water," he told me. Then he went to the door, and pushed me back inside. "You think you're smart, don't you, Percy?" he said. "Well, I'm smarter. Gloria won't save you. We're going to receive kidnap notes, see? And they'll never find you, because who would think you'd be here?"

"I don't understand, Daddy."

"I can stand it now," he said loudly. "It's the last time you'll call me that."

"But—Daddy!"

"You'll rot here, understand? Rot!"

"It'll never work," I said. "Gloria won't agree to this."

"Yes, she will," he shouted. He slammed the door. "How do you like that, kid?" He rapped on the door with his knuckles and gave a short laugh, then went away.

I was hungry so I opened the box, and there was a loaf of bread and some peanut butter, along with other stuff. I made a peanut butter sandwich, and listened to Horace drive away.

Then I took off the lock and got out of there, and started along the icy road again. It was windy, and I kept thinking how Gloria would be my mother, and everything would be quite nice, after all. But Horace harbored evil in his heart. It was best he died.

When I reached our block I saw the police cars, and groups of people standing around. I knew if I showed up, Gloria wouldn't say anything about them putting me in the basement room at the cottage.

I came into the yard.

Horace was standing with two plainclothesmen. He'd been crying, and he kept moving his hands as if he were shooing flies. The door was blown off the front of the house, and white-jacketed attendants carried a covered stretcher to a silver ambulance.

"There's the boy!" somebody said.

And Horace saw me. His mouth dropped open.

"Hi, Daddy. Where's Mother?"

Well, he couldn't even talk, and one of the officers explained that Horace had picked Gloria up at work, and they'd driven home and he was putting the car away, while she opened the front door.

I got sick on the front lawn, and they carried me to my room, and put me to bed. I was like that for five days, but I got over it, really, the first night, because the more I thought about it, the more I knew it wasn't right the way Gloria had agreed to let Horace take me to the cottage. But I wanted time to think about what I would do.

There was a lot of coming and going in the house, and lots of talk about why a grenade should have killed Mother. I called her "Mother" in my mind all the time now. It was a comfortable sound. And Horace would come and stand by my bed, and stare at me. He seldom said anything at all.

Gradually, everything died down again.

It was spring now. Flowers bloomed. I knew I really had to do something about

Horace. He regarded me strangely, and when he spoke, it was short and gruff. He kept saying rather slyly, "The police haven't settled a thing. They're still looking for who did it, Percy. What d'you think of that?"

"It's a terrible thing, Daddy."

"Don't call me that. You know, Percy, it was just a joke, the way I locked you in the basement room at the cottage."

"Of course, Daddy. I know that."

"Nobody'd ever believe I did that."

"No, Daddy. You're quite right."

"I was just kidding when I said that about kidnapping, the way I did."

"Quite."

Only I couldn't come up with a thing. He was worried I'd say something. What bothered me was, I didn't want him to escape punishment. I knew it was only a matter of time before he'd figure out how to fix it so I was a ward of the juvenile court again, and then I couldn't get at him. He wasn't invulnerable, even if it seemed that way. He was thinking all the time, too. His eyes would be all screwed up, while he smoked his stinking pipe. But it finally came to me that it was his fault Gloria had died. Because he should never have picked her up after work, and *he* should have opened the front door himself. Maybe it was just wishing, after the fact.

Then one day Horace said, "I'm taking today off, and we're going to the cottage. There's a place on the roof that needs shingling. I'll do it myself. I ordered the stuff, and it's all at the cottage."

"Wonderful, Daddy." But I wondered if he were planning something.

I had to get to him first. I didn't know how.

I was nearly sick with thinking.

We drove out there, and stopped at a gas station down the road and Horace said to the man, "Would you come this afternoon and pick up the car, Mike? I want the brakes checked and a lube job. I'll be working at the cottage."

"Sure," Mike said. He was tall, with red hair. "I'll bring Charley in the truck around two. Okay?"

We went to the cottage.

"You can play while I shingle the spot on the roof," Horace said. I could tell he was holding himself down. Once I turned and saw him making faces at me, behind my back. He was awfully nervous.

He went up on the roof with a ladder and shingles and stuff, and a rope. I played by the lake. Well, I didn't really play. I skipped stones, thinking hard all the time. I had a feeling time was getting short. I didn't know what was in

Horace's mind.

I went back by the car in the drive. He was on the other side of the sharp-peaked roof. A rope was tied to the television antenna stanchion on this side. I went around the other side.

"Hi, Daddy."

He held a hammer in one hand, staring at me. He didn't say anything. But he looked like he wanted to throw it.

I saw how he had the rope tied around his waist.

"What's the rope for, Daddy?"

"To keep me from falling, in case I slip, stupid."

"Oh."

I went around by the television stanchion again. There was slack in the rope. He had his feet braced all right. But the rope would catch him if he slipped. Pretty smart of him.

And I felt something good in my chest.

I went to the little shed out back, and found some more rope. I took the rope into the cottage, and went into the attic. There was a window by the television stanchion. I untied Horace's rope and fastened mine to it, and let it hang down into the drive. It was quarter to two, so I had to work fast. I was afraid it wouldn't work again. It might be all right to just let the rope hang, I thought as I came into the drive again. But that was taking a chance. He would keep from slipping just to spite me.

I took the rope and tied it to the back bumper of the car, with just the same amount of slack as he'd had when it was fastened to the stanchion.

Then I waited.

The truck finally came, and Mike got out, and the other one, Charley, drove the truck away. Mike came over to the car.

"Daddy says just to take it. The keys are there."

"Well, I'd better see him, sonny."

"But, he said——"

"Sure." He ruffled my hair. I detest people who do that. "Where is he?"

"He's on the roof, the other side."

He went around the front of the cottage, and hollered up at Horace. "I've come for your car, Horace."

"Fine, Mike. Will you bring it back?"

"Sure thing. About six. Okay?"

"Perfect."

Horace went back to hammering. The sound echoed in the still warm

afternoon.

I followed Mike to the car, and stood there, watching.

"You have to kind of speed up," I said. "There's a little slope in the driveway, there."

"I been driving for twenty years, kid."

The engine started and he drove away, not too fast, not too slow.

I watched the roof. Horace gave a scream, but apparently Mike didn't hear him. Horace came flying over the peak of the roof, waving his arms, still holding the hammer. He came fast down this side of the roof, and screamed again, and smashed into the driveway. Still Mike didn't stop driving. He was dragging Horace.

I yelled at the man to stop.

He heard me then, and got out of the car and saw what had happened. He ran to Horace and knelt down, and put his hand inside Horace's shirt.

"My God," he said. "Oh, my God!"

He looked at the rope.

"He had the rope tied to the bumper," he said.

"Yes. Is he dead?"

"Oh, kid. This is awful, I know." He came over to me and ruffled my hair some more, and groaned. "Your old man's gone," he said.

"Poor Daddy," I said.

"You got a phone?"

"I don't think so. We haven't moved up to the cottage yet. Are you certain he's dead?"

"Yes, kid. My God, what a terrible thing!"

When we got back to the gas station, so Mike could use the phone, I heard him say to Charley, "It was stupid. I never heard of such a thing. Imagine, tying the rope to the car bumper. Why would he do a stupid thing like that?"

"It's terrible," Charley said.

It was terrible, I suppose. But I had to admit, there was a kind of satisfaction in it. And success in any endeavor shouldn't be sneered at.

I'm in a new foster home now. Everybody has been very kind, trying to comfort me. These people are the McMurdles. George and Alice. It looked okay at first, but then I began to feel the animosities. They argue a lot behind closed doors. It's him, mostly. But the next thing, they'll be turning against me. I can sense it. It worries me, but I suppose I'll come up with an answer. It will take some thought, of course. . . .

by Michael Croft

What looked like a case of stolen government documents—top-secret —soon turned into a double murder. Michael Croft set out to solve it all.

Los Angeles was hot, the way it sometimes gets in September. It was Saturday morning and I'd finished the business that brought me to town—a sweep of the offices of a large local bank. I'd found a bug in the boardroom, a miniature microphone and FM transmitter built into the Bakelite body of an electric outlet. It was a top-quality device that would keep on working forever because it drew its power from the electrical wiring and didn't have a battery to wear out. The client wanted me to tear it out, and it took a while to convince him I shouldn't. When you find a bug or a telephone tap you have a beautiful opportunity to feed misinformation—we used to say "disinformation" in Army Intelligence—to the opposition. I advised my client to hold his board meetings in his office until he could get a good private investigator to find out who was playing games with him. He asked me to take the case, but I explained that a local private investigator would be less expensive and more likely to have the kind of Southern California contacts it would take to do the job. I recommended Bob McQuiston, another old Army man and the best counterintelligence specialist on the West Coast.

It felt like eighty degrees in my room at the Santa Inez Inn in Pacific Palisades. If it was that warm on the ocean, it would be in the nineties downtown. I had planned to visit with some old friends before leaving L.A., but now I was starting to think about flying back to Washington. It wouldn't be any cooler there, but there was a stack of work waiting for me at my office on Pennsylvania Avenue. I was almost ready to check out and drive to the airport when the phone rang. It was Dave Morrisey, a retired New York police captain who had migrated to Southern California and gotten a job as security chief for a big electronics company.

"McQuiston told me you were in town, Mike," he said. "I've got a problem you might be able to help me with."

"Where are you now?" I asked.

He said he was at his office.

It took about twenty minutes to drive down the coast highway to Santa Monica and take the freeway to West L.A., where Watkins Systems had its

main plant. It was a long, low cinder-block building surrounded on four sides by an asphalt parking lot. Morrisey was waiting for me at the guard desk just inside the main entrance.

He was still the same paunchy, silver-haired shamus I'd first met years ago in New York when a black-bag job turned sour and six of New York's finest caught me inside the offices of a Middle Eastern mission to the United Nations. It seems the CIA hotshot who was supposed to get the specs on the alarm system didn't find out about a second backup system that had been installed a few weeks before my nighttime visit. Of course, our liaison people fixed things up with the police, but everytime I saw Morrisey he managed to needle me about it. Except this time, which meant he was plenty worried.

"Somebody broke into one of the vaulted offices and got away with some of the goosiest stuff in the plant," he said, dispensing with any preliminaries. "We're pretty sure we know who did it, but we can't figure out how she did it."

"'She'?" I repeated.

He nodded. "A junior engineer we recently hired. Name's Patricia Odum. She walked in here this morning, flashed her employee badge to Holloway here"—he gestured towards the guard—"and went inside. Five minutes later an alarm went off in one of the vaults—her office, in fact. Then Odum came back out here and took off."

I turned to the guard. "Don't you close this post if you hear an alarm bell?"

He shrugged. "It's not my job." I could see by the shoulder patch on his tunic that he was a rent-a-cop from one of the local guard services. It figured.

"That's right," Morrisey said, a bit sheepishly. "We're issuing new instructions today."

I nodded. No point in rubbing it in. Maybe Morrisey would forget about that New York bag job now. "Have you asked the police to pick up Odum?"

"No," he replied. "I don't want to send out any announcements about what's happened here until I can answer some of the questions I know I'm going to be asked—like how did she get into the vault and what did she take? I'm hoping you can help me with the first one."

"I'll give it a try," I said. "Let's take a look at the vault."

It was a long walk past row after row of desks and drafting tables to the scene of the break-in. Like many aerospace companies, Watkins Systems does a mix of business with the government. Some of it is unclassified, so no special precautions are taken; some is confidential, secret or top secret, and all working materials are locked in steel filing cabinets when not in use. But the ultrasensi-

tive projects are carried out in vaulted offices—windowless rooms with walls of steel and reinforced concrete and thick, bank-type doors with three-position combination locks. Just like the room Morrisey led me into.

"This is it," he said. "A top secret-plus job for the CIA. It's a pilot project, so we've only had one of our people working on it until just recently, a senior engineer named Steve Wagner. Wagner's been in here by himself until last week, when we got the special clearances for Odum and assigned her to help him."

The room was about twenty by thirty feet, divided into two cubicles by a five-foot high partition. Two of Morrisey's security people were in one of the cubicles removing files and other documents from a filing cabinet and stacking them on the desk. One of the security men looked up as we entered.

"The last ten volumes of the design specs are gone," he said.

Morrisey paled and turned to me.

"That's the Agency's design specification," he said. "It's a twenty-volume opus covering all the details of U.S. electronic intelligence operations. She walked off with half of it."

"Where's the other half?" I asked.

He pointed to a stack of softbound booklets on the desk. The pile was about three inches high.

"Anything else missing?"

The security man shook his head. I looked around the vault. It was almost as barren as a solitary cell. There were two fluorescent fixtures, one over each cubicle, and two air-conditioning ducts. There was also a dome-shaped metal plate about six inches across placed in the middle of the ceiling. I pointed to it.

"Is that your alarm?"

Morrisey nodded. "Yeah, ultrasonic. It goes off if there's any movement in the vault."

It was a common but effective burglar alarm system. When the vault was empty the ceiling dome would fill the room with a silent, high-frequency vibration. Any motion in the vault would change the pitch of the silent echo bouncing back to the ceiling dome, and set off the alarm. During working hours, when the vault was occupied, the system was turned off.

"She set it off when she walked in—we know that much," Morrisey said. "What I'd like to know is how she got through this door."

It was a six-inch-thick steel door with a three-position combination lock. There was no sign of damage to it. It had been opened by working the combination.

"I presume Odum didn't know the combination," I said.

"No," Morrisey replied. "I keep all the vault combinations in my safe. I open the vaults in the morning and close them at night, so none of the engineering staff needs to know the combinations."

"What about your security people?"

"Not them, either. In fact, they had to wait till I came down here from home to let them in after the alarm went off this morning."

"Oh? Then the vault was locked when your men arrived?"

Morrisey nodded. "She must have stopped to slam the door and spin the dial on her way out. I guess she realized it would slow us up."

The security men had finished checking out the cubicle belonging to Steve Wagner, the senior engineer, and had moved on to Patricia Odum's cubicle. Wagner's office was bare except for a desk, two chairs, the filing cabinet from which the classified specifications had been removed, and a large color photograph mounted on the wall. This last was a spectacular view of the California coast north of Malibu. Morrisey followed my gaze.

"Wagner won first prize with that in the company photo contest last year. He's quite an amateur photographer."

One of Morrisey's men called from the other cubicle. I followed Morrisey into Odum's office. The security man was holding a woman's handbag.

"She must have panicked and left this behind when the alarm went off," he said. He upended the bag over the desk and three items tumbled out: a white plastic box about the size of a cigarette package, with a push button on one end; a wallet; and a cheap, .22-caliber revolver, a "Saturday night special."

Morrisey turned the plastic box over. "What do you make of this?" he asked, handing it to me. "Could it be something she used to work the combination lock?"

I examined the box. It was a simple radio-control device. "This thing opens doors, all right," I said, "but on garages, not vaults. It saves you the trouble of getting out of your car." I put it in my pocket.

The wallet contained Odum's social security card and a membership card in a professional engineering society.

One of the security men picked up the gun and broke it open. "Six live rounds and two empty chambers," he said. He sniffed the muzzle. "It's been fired recently."

"Maybe you better keep your hands off the gun until we find out what it was used for," I suggested. The security man quickly returned the revolver to the desk.

I looked around Odum's cubicle. Morrisey had said she only moved in a few days earlier. She apparently hadn't had time to leave much of a personal mark on the sterile-looking room. The only personal item in view was a mobile suspended from the air-conditioning duct overhead. I climbed up on the desk and inspected it.

It was a novelty shop item—peace symbols suspended from a tree of fine piano wire. I unhooked it and dropped it on the desk, then removed the grating over the air-conditioning duct. The duct was square, about eight inches on a side.

"You're not going to tell me she got in through that?" Morrisey said.

I climbed down.

"No, I'm not. You haven't called the police or the FBI?"

"No," he replied.

"Good," I said. "Don't. Let's lock this place up again and see if we can locate Odum. Do you have her address?"

"Yeah, an apartment she shares with another woman on Normandie."

We stopped at the guard desk on the way out. I asked the rent-a-cop—his name was Holloway—if he recalled what Patricia Odum was carrying when she came out of the building that morning.

"I don't check what they're carrying," he said with a shrug. "I just sign them in and out."

I looked at the log. Patricia Odum had signed in at 11:47 and back out at 11:53; she had been inside seven minutes. I flipped the page and ran down the list of signatures on the Friday log. Odum had been in and out twice on Friday: she arrived at 7:45 in the morning, left at 2:35, returned at 5:05, and left for the day four minutes later. It looked as though she had taken a long, late lunch.

After the air-conditioned plant, the parking lot was like a blast furnace. We got into Morrisey's car and he headed for the downtown ramp to the freeway. As he drove, he reached into his pocket and took out a passport-size photo.

"This is what Odum looks like. It's a copy of her employee badge photograph."

That kind of photo doesn't tell you much. This one said Patricia Odum was an average-looking dark-haired woman in her mid-twenties. I handed it back to Morrisey as he slowed for the Normandie Avenue exit.

Odum and her roommate lived in an apartment house a few blocks above Wilshire Boulevard. There was a garage entrance down front, but it didn't respond to the garage door opener we found in the handbag. We went upstairs

and knocked on the apartment door.

Susan Hewitt was another average-looking woman in her mid-twenties but with fair hair. She also worked at Watkins Systems, in a different department. She told us Patricia Odum wasn't in.

"She was very upset about something when she came home last evening," she said, "but she wouldn't talk about it. She left here this morning without saying where she was going."

"Any idea what might be bothering her?" I asked.

"I suppose she may have had a fight with her boyfriend. She was supposed to have dinner with him last night, but she came right home after work and didn't go out again."

"Might she have gone to see him this morning?"

"I guess so," said Susan.

She let us into Odum's room. A small valise had been packed for a short trip, and most of Odum's other posessions—books, records, and the like—had been packed in four cardboard cartons. Her other clothing was still in her closet and bureau drawers. Patricia Odum had been getting ready to go somewhere, but her roommate told us she knew nothing about it.

Odum's boyfriend was Gary Dade, an accountant whom Susan Hewitt had dated previously. He had met Patricia while calling for her roommate several months ago, and had been dating her exclusively since. Hewitt said that Dade lived in a singles building in Marina Del Rey and volunteered to take us there.

It was cooler in Marina Del Rey, on the ocean just south of Venice. Dade lived in a new high rise with an underground garage. The garage door responded to the radio-control unit. Morrisey drove around to the front of the building and showed Odum's picture to the doorman.

"She was here this morning in one hell of a dither," he said. "Asked me if she could leave her car out front while she went upstairs."

"Has she gone?" I asked.

"Yeah, she came right back out. Wasn't inside more than five minutes."

The doorman wasn't sure when Odum had come by, but he guessed it was around 10:30. We went in and rode the elevator up to Dade's apartment. He didn't answer the bell, but the door was unlocked. Morrisey and I went in, while Hewitt waited in the hallway.

A young man was lying on his back on the living room carpet. There was a small bullet hole just ahead of his right ear and another below his right jaw.

"Is he dead?" asked Morrisey.

I felt a faint, erratic pulse.

"Not quite, but damn near," I replied. I heard a gasp and turned to find Susan Hewitt in the doorway. She looked faint, and Morrisey grabbed her and steered her back out into the hallway. I phoned the emergency police number for an ambulance, then got some blankets from the bedroom and covered the man, who I assumed was Dade. There wasn't much else I could do for him.

I looked around the apartment. No signs of a struggle or a search; everything was neat and tidy. There was an overnight bag packed with a change of linen and shaving kit on the bed. Back in the living room I found a pair of spent .22-caliber shells lodged in the carpet nap near Dade.

I rejoined Morrisey and Hewitt in the hallway. He had led her to a sofa near the elevator. I took him aside.

"There are a couple of shells in there on the carpet that are probably going to match the gun we found in Odum's office," I said. "You'll have to tell the police about it, but I suggest you don't mention the missing documents."

Morrisey cocked an eyebrow. "You're asking me to withhold evidence in an assault, maybe a murder?"

"It's up to you," I replied. "I'm only offering advice. But I think I may be able to get those documents back and catch the thief as well—if you can keep the robbery quiet."

I left him to mull that over while I went back into the apartment and checked Dade. While we were talking the assault had turned into a murder—Gary Dade was dead.

We spent two hours with the police. Morrisey decided to take my advice and not say anything about the missing specifications. He told the police he'd found the gun during a routine desk check, that we went looking for Odum for an explanation, and that was how we happened to find Dade. The detective sergeant who questioned us probably wouldn't have bought that story if he'd thought about it, but he was too busy hassling Morrisey for not having reported the gun immediately and for letting his man get fingerprints all over it.

We drove Susan Hewitt back to her apartment and walked her upstairs. She said she was afraid Odum had gone crazy and she asked us to check out all the rooms before we left to make sure she was alone. I looked into Odum's room and saw that the valise was gone.

"I don't think you have to worry about your roommate coming back," I said. "She seems to have been here while we were gone. She took her bag, so she's probably far away by now."

Morrisey phoned this discovery to the police.

"They're coming out here, Miss Hewitt," he said as he hung up. "They don't want you to touch anything until they look around."

Morrisey drove us back to the plant. "I'm not having much luck fitting this together, Mike," he said as we headed west on the freeway. "Odum breaks her dinner date with her boyfriend last night, then goes over to his apartment this morning and shoots him. Then she goes to the office, breaks into the vault, makes off with the documents, and flies the coop. What's it all about?"

"I'll tell you when I'm certain," I said.

"Oh, fine! Maybe meanwhile you'll tell me what I'm supposed to do when the police APB nets Odum with the classified documents in her possession. Should I say I didn't notice them missing?"

"Don't worry," I replied. "They may catch Odum, but they won't find the documents with her."

He had pulled into the plant parking lot. I got out of the car and turned to him. "I've got an important errand to run now. I'll be back in my room at the Santa Inez in half an hour if you have to reach me."

I stopped at the guard desk before going to my car. Holloway the rent-a-guard was still on duty. I checked Friday's log again. As I expected, Susan Hewitt had signed out for the day at half past four in the afternoon. I got into my car and headed back towards Pacific Palisades.

I needed an unlisted number from my address book, which was locked in my briefcase back in my hotel room. I got back to the room and made the call. Just as I hung up the phone rang. It was Morrisey.

"The police just called me," he said. "They found Susan Hewitt dead when they got to her apartment. Three slugs from a thirty-eight. Odum must have come back."

"I'll meet you at the apartment," I said.

Morrisey was already there when I arrived. He was arguing with the detective who'd questioned us earlier.

"This is a police matter," the cop was telling Morrisey, "and you have no official standing. I can't let you in there."

"Then maybe you can at least confirm something," I said as I walked up. "Did you find a dark wig among Susan Hewitt's things?"

He eyed me suspiciously. "We did. If you know something about this case you'd better not withhold it, Croft," he said.

"It was just a wild guess," I said, taking Morrisey's arm and steering him down the hallway. When we got to the street he turned to me.

"I think you better tell me what's going on, Mike," he said. "What's this

business about a wig? You're not trying to say someone killed Susan Hewitt because she was wearing a wig and looked like Patricia Odum?''

''No, I'm not trying to say that,'' I replied. ''Look, there's really nothing more to be done about all of this now. I'll have your missing documents and your spy for you the first thing Monday morning. Now, why not spend the rest of the weekend cooling off? Have you still got your boat?''

Morrisey still had this thirty-two-foot cruiser. He and his wife and I spent Sunday on the water, out near Catalina Island. He kept trying to pump me about the Odum-Hewitt business, but I had resolved to take at least one day off from business. I lay on the deck drinking his beer and watching the seagulls wheeling overhead.

Bright and early Monday morning, I drove to Santa Monica and stopped at a nondescript building I remembered from my Army days, the local CIA field office. As prearranged, I picked up two staff investigators and continued on to the Watkins Systems plant. Morrisey was already in his office when we arrived. I introduced my companions.

''These are Adams and Brown,'' I said. ''They work for your client and I thought it would be a good idea to have them handy this morning.''

Morrisey shook hands, then turned to me. ''And now are you going to tell me what's going on, or do we play more guessing games?''

''You'll know everything in a few minutes,'' I replied, glancing at my watch. ''I think it's time we adjourn to the vault.''

The four of us went to the vaulted room where Patricia Odum shared the office with Steve Wagner.

''You don't expect her to walk in, do you?'' asked Morrisey.

Before I could reply a figure appeared in the doorway. It was not Patricia Odum, but a well-dressed young man of about thirty years of age carrying an attaché case.

''Mr. Wagner, I presume?'' I said.

He seemed startled and looked from me to Morrisey. Adams moved silently between him and the door.

''What is all this, Mr. Morrisey?'' Wagner asked.

''We just want to take a look in your attaché case,'' I said, reaching for it. He jerked the case away and darted a hand inside his jacket, bringing out a .38 automatic. Adams moved quickly behind him, pinning his arms and relieving him of the gun. I took the case from his other hand, put it on the desk and opened it. The missing documents were stacked neatly inside.

"Adams," I said, "I think you should take Mr. Wagner back to Mr. Morrisey's office and explain to him the new facts of life. We'll just keep his gun here for the Los Angeles Police Department, in case he doesn't see the light. I'm sure it's going to match the slugs they took out of Susan Hewitt."

After Adams and Brown had taken their prisoner away, Morrisey carefully checked the contents of Wagner's attaché case. He breathed a great sigh of relief.

"They're all here," he said. "Now, would it be asking too much of you to explain all of this?"

"Not at all. The first thing you must understand is that no one was in this vault on Saturday, except you, me, and your two assistants."

"What?"

"That's right. I took one look at that door and I knew that I couldn't have gotten it open in anything less than twenty minutes, and I'm the best surreptitious entry man in the business, if I do say so myself. Patricia Odum was inside the plant a total of seven minutes. It takes about two minutes to walk back here from the front entrance and another two to get back out. That leaves her three minutes to get through this door, take the documents, and close and lock the door again. No one in the world could do that."

"Then how did she put her handbag with the gun on her desk Saturday morning?"

"She didn't. Someone else put it there on Friday evening, before the vault was closed for the weekend."

Morrisey shook his head. "I'm afraid I don't follow. How could a gun locked in a vault be used to kill a man several miles away?"

"Look," I said, "this is going to make more sense if I begin at the beginning and reconstruct what happened.

"Wagner must have been peddling classified materials from this project for some time. He was going about it systematically, taking each volume of classified specifications home one at a time, photographing it with one of his expensive cameras, and returning it to the file. He was all by himself in here, so he didn't have to worry about someone seeing him taking the documents from the file and putting them in his attaché case, or putting them back. But then, last week, you put Patricia Odum in here with him. That presented a problem for him, but Odum left the office early on Friday. Wagner took advantage of the opportunity and put all ten of the remaining volumes in his case. He decided to take them home over the weekend, photograph them, and get them back into the

file before Odum came in this morning."

"But Odum came back to the office around five o'clock last Friday. Mightn't she have seen Wagner taking the documents?"

"That wasn't Odum. It was Susan Hewitt in a dark wig, and she was playing a very nasty trick on her roommate: You see, there were two totally unrelated crimes going on: one of passion and one of espionage. Gary Dade had been Hewitt's beau until Odum took him away from her. I think Dade and Odum were going away to get married this weekend, and Odum planned to move in with him when they got back—that's the reason for the suitcases and packing cartons. Odum left work early on Friday to get ready for the trip. Hewitt left the office a couple of hours later with the handbag containing the wallet, the door opener, and the gun, all of which she had taken from Odum's room that morning. The wallet was a real giveaway because it contained only Odum's social security card and a membership card in an engineering society. Obviously the wallet Odum was actually carrying around must have contained her driver's license, her registration, some money, maybe some credit cards. That handbag had to be a plant.

"Hewitt went to Dade's apartment house, and, using the radio door opener, drove into the basement garage. She went up to his apartment, went in, and shot him. She didn't realize how difficult it is to kill someone with a twenty-two-caliber pistol. She had fatally wounded him, but he wasn't dead when she left the apartment.

"Hewitt planned to frame Odum for the murder—that was the reason for the phony handbag. She put on her dark wig—which made her resemble Odum pretty closely—and went back to the plant right after shooting Dade on Friday afternoon. That zombie you have out at the guard desk probably wouldn't have noticed anything even if she hadn't bothered about the wig. She forged Odum's name to the log and came back here to the vault. She left the handbag on Odum's desk. Her idea was that the police would discover Dade's body sometime over the weekend, then the handbag would be found when you opened the vault this morning, and someone would put two and two together."

"But why was Patricia Odum so upset Friday evening if she hadn't just murdered Dade?"

"She wasn't upset. Remember, it was Susan Hewitt who told us that. Odum didn't have any idea what happened until Saturday morning. Then Hewitt told her, probably in part for the sadistic pleasure of seeing her reaction, and partly so she'd run and implicate herself further. Odum didn't believe her, but she probably phoned Dade, then drove over to his apartment when he didn't

answer. She didn't have the door opener because Hewitt had taken it, so she left her car with the doorman and went upstairs. She let herself in, found Dade, and, like Hewitt, thought he was dead. I guess Hewitt had told her where she left the gun, and Odum panicked and went to get it, not realizing that the vault was locked over the weekend. When she couldn't get inside, she went back to her apartment, got her bag, and probably left town.

"I knew the Dade killing was a frame-up when I found those two shells on the carpet, because a revolver doesn't eject shells like an automatic, and there was no reason to reload after firing only twice. Hewitt wanted to do everything she could to pin the murder on Odum. She wanted to be sure the body was found soon, so she jumped at the chance to guide us to it and help discover it. But she gave herself away—she almost fainted when she realized Dade wasn't dead. If he had lived she would have been in a fix."

Morrisey shook his head in grim wonder. "And who killed Hewitt?" he asked.

"Wagner. When Hewitt planted the murder weapon on Odum's desk while Wagner was busy stuffing his briefcase with classified documents, she unknowingly joined the two crimes together. Wagner must have seen her. He didn't know what she was up to, but he was afraid that she had seen what he was doing. He knew who she was from seeing her around the plant, and he must have known she was Odum's roommate. He probably worried about it for awhile, then decided he'd rather be safe than sorry."

"So he added murder to espionage."

"Yes. I wished I'd acted a bit sooner, I might have saved her. After I left you at the plant Saturday, I called the local Agency field office and explained the situation to them. I suggested they put Wagner under surveillance in case he met with his contact to pass along the photos of the design specs. They staked out his place and saw him when he returned from murdering Hewitt. Maybe if I'd moved more quickly they could have prevented her death."

"Well," said Morrisey, "you would only have saved her to face a murder charge, just like Wagner."

"Wagner may not face any charges," I said.

"What!"

"Dave, finding out that someone in your own organization is working for the opposition is exactly like discovering a bug or a wiretap: you know you've fallen behind in the game, but you also have a golden opportunity to catch up. If the Agency can work it out with the local prosecutor, Wagner will be given a choice: face charges of murder and espionage, or turn double agent. I know, it's

distasteful, but Wagner can do more good working for our side than occupying a cell in Quentin. The Agency can use him to feed misinformation to the other side, and maybe unravel the organization he was dealing with. If it were me, I'd take the rap. Wagner would probably survive eight or ten years in prison; I wouldn't guarantee his longevity if he decides to play the double game."

Morrisey shook his head. "I guess it's beyond a dumb flatfoot like me. It was one hell of a mess, no matter how you look at it. The completely innocent party was Patricia Odum, and now she's running from a murder charge she thinks is hanging over her."

"You can give part of the story to the press and wire services, enough so she'll realize she's in the clear. That ought to bring her back. Then you can pay her whatever reward is due."

"What do you mean?"

"For providing you with information leading to the apprehension of an espionage agent," I said. "You see, you've left one very important question unasked."

"What's that?"

"If no one broke into this vault on Saturday morning, why did the alarm go off?"

"That's right! Why did it go off?"

I went into Odum's cubicle, picked up her mobile from the desk, and held it aloft. The draft from the air-conditioning duct started it turning.

"This set it off," I said. "Remember how those ultrasonic detectors work—any motion, however slight, will trigger them. Odum hung this from the air-conditioning duct when she moved into this office last week. Whenever the air conditioning went on, it made the mobile turn. During the week the alarm was set when the vault was closed at night, after the plant cooled down—the air conditioning had switched off and the mobile had stopped turning. But Saturday morning the alarm was still set. When the temperature inside began to rise by mid-morning, the blower went on and the mobile began to move. That's what set off the alarm. Odum's standing outside at the time was sheer coincidence.

"If the alarm hadn't gone off, you wouldn't have thought to check Wagner's office and would never have discovered that the documents were missing."

I handed the mobile to Morrisey.

"Just think how much worse a place the world would be this morning if Odum hadn't hung this in her office last week."

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THE MAN IN THE WHITE ROOM

by

Rich Rainey

The man tried to become part of the tree. His fingernails dug into the bark and his arms hugged the wide trunk as though it were a lost love. He tried to stop his heart from screaming but the roaring blood still echoed inside his brain. His gasping breath was so loud, so thunderous, he was certain it could be heard by his pursuers. All around him they were thrashing the woods, searching.

When he dared to open his eyes he saw a brilliant spotlight pierce the night. A sweeping arc of yellow light poured across the woodland floor. It was shining right on the spot where he stood. Guided by terror, his inner voice chanted: "If I get out of this, if only I get out of this . . . run, run, another country. Why didn't I leave, oh Jesus, what's happened to me? Let me be free. I gotta get out of here. . . ."

The man is me and he didn't get out of it.

Three troopers converged on his hiding place. He broke cover and ran. But his legs were exhausted and no matter how much he wanted them to keep moving, they gave out. Then, as he fell, a heavy weight landed on the back of his neck. And though it was only a fist it brought the chase to an end.

Four walls. Four crazy walls padded. The guards wear chromium masks and say nothing to me, not wishing to provoke me. For I am in training and soon I will be a good man.

The young psychiatrist—"You can call me Robert"—wishes that I were an attractive redheaded woman since he is not being paid fifty dollars an hour to see me. But he is staff, I am a patient, and he must treat me. This treatment consists of him telling me about his fine new ranch home and what a large personal library he has. Then he tells me that someday I can be like him if I try hard enough.

In the beginning he asked me for motives. He looked for symbolism in the weapon I used, and he wrote down my answers in a black notebook. But there

was no symbolism and our words were only so much babbling in the long run. "Why did you choose such an odd weapon, James? Surely you could have found something a lot simpler," he would ask. And I would shrug and say, "No reason. It was in my possession so I just used it. I didn't expect it to be traced to me." At times like this we both realized there would be no immediate change in my condition. For one thing, he wouldn't be satisfied until I conjured up a symbol for him. And another thing, in my mind I was aware of no psychotic condition. It just happened.

"You can call me Robert" would then slap me on the back, smile meaningfully, and leave me alone in the white room.

I see a girl, her long hair flowing. She is sitting by the river, waiting for me, sunlight coating her tanned perfect body. Quietly approaching her, she hasn't yet seen or heard me, my clasped fingers caress her eyes. Surprised, she laughs and we fall to the ground, listening to the flowing waters. And I am astounded that she is my wife, that with her I can forget about the world.

The house sat on a not too desolate hill. It always looked like summertime there. The grass was straw burned, the air was dry. It was one story high, with an aspiring chimney and loft. Basically one large room with slight indentations to separate kitchen from living room from bedroom. The fireplace was an accumulation of crumbling brick, filled with ashes from long ago.

In front of the porch steps, cranky and untrustworthy, a path beat out of the grass, dusty and almost straight. It ran for half a mile, interrupted by a forgotten one-lane road, then continued past a sandy stretch, a clump of forest, and then to the shore where the water roared.

A row of trees formed a barrier on the left side of the house, circling towards the rear. Tall spindly things, no kites. Whenever the wind struck a chord, the thin boughs danced.

We spent many nights with no lights, no humming lamp posts, and in the darkness the house slept unseen, unknown. That was the reason we bought it. It was so alone. "There's no one around for miles," Sarah said when she first saw it. "Let's take it." It needed work but we planned to restore it when the local community college upped my teaching salary.

On the summer nights, when the house was too warm, we slept outside, near the caves just behind our land. Woodlore for the city dweller on the run. Time was different then. Two days was a week, who could tell. The air was cool, breezy. Firelight and lovemaking. A temporary paradise.

I see a girl, her long hair flowing. I see her coffin lowered into the ground.

It is a Thursday night. We've come into town to shop for a new quilt bedspread, one that will go with the brass bed Sarah picked up at a farmhouse auction.

There is some twenty feet between us. I am watching a merchant dress his window-front maniken. And Sarah is ahead of me, already at the next department store, waiting for me to catch up with her.

First there is the thud of the wheels as the long black car climbs up the curb, then the roar of its straining engine as it flies over the sidewalk, and then. . . .

The driver doesn't know how much I love Sarah as the impact of the car forces her through the store window. And behind her the glass dances, all at once a million pieces. Thin lines of blood cross her pretty face. And the driver doesn't even know he's off the road.

Sarah is looking at my eyes. Her face is bewildered, frightened, fading. There is nothing I can do, nothing I can say, because she is dead.

Someone else calls the police, someone else calls the ambulance, because I am beyond all that, trying to reach Sarah to touch her one last time. But I can't reach her, just cut my hands on the glass, and when I see her slashed body under the chrome bumper I no longer want to reach her.

Next I am in the car with him. The radio is blaring, the air stinks of whiskey, and the driver is slumped over the steering wheel, passed out. There is an empty bottle on the floor. Several arms hold me, tear me away. It takes maybe three or four men. I am screaming because Sarah is dead, they are screaming because my hands are on the driver's throat.

I waited a month although I planned to let a longer period of time pass. But the dreams I had would not let me wait any longer. Two, three times a night, I would wake up, sitting straight up in the brass bed, looking for Sarah but only finding emptiness beside me. The house was no longer mine. It was haunted with the ghost of my wife.

And the daily newspaper told about the unfortunate accident on Main Street. Judge Parmonter, city court, lost control of his car due to a malfunction in the steering mechanism, and a young woman was crushed to death by the car. No mention of the empty bottle of whiskey, no mention of the drunken stupor the judge was in. No mention of anything but a sad mishap. The woman was survived by a husband and two distant cousins.

The life insurance policy, which we'd taken on Sarah's urging, came to

twenty thousand dollars. I did not consider it a fair exchange at all. No payment could take away the image of myself standing helplessly on the sidewalk while Sarah entered another world.

The poor judge took a two-week leave of absence to get over his traumatic experience. He even tried to soothe his conscience by sending me a gilt-edged condolence card. I didn't read it. I wanted no excuse for his messed-up life.

One night, a month after the accident, the man drove his car to the judge's estate. It was in a secluded section of town just before the city limits. The man drove past the gate and parked his car about one hundred yards down the road. On the back seat of the car there was a mace. It was a foot-length lead pipe with two heavy chains fastened to it, each holding a spiked iron ball at the end of the links. The man picked up the mace and walked towards the house. He climbed a small brick wall and went directly to a window at the front of the house from which light escaped.

Inside the house, before a raging fire, Judge Parmonter sat in a soft leather chair, drinking from a long stemmed glass. The man watched Judge Parmonter for a couple of minutes, letting his emotions build until he no longer perceived the judge as a human being, just an object that had to be eliminated. The man heard a television blaring at high volume inside the house.

He circled the house, trying a number of doors until he found the right one. It was a back entrance. The lock was old, rusted, and unstable. He took out a screwdriver from his back pocket and unfastened the lock, prying it completely out of the door. He quietly entered the house and crossed the kitchen floor.

He looked at a luminous clock above the refrigerator. It was now one o'clock. Sign-off time. He walked down the hall, gently carrying the mace so the chains wouldn't make any noise. During the Star Spangled Banner the man approached the judge from the rear. Driven by blind hatred, by the ruin of his life, by circumstance, by a bedspread for Sarah, the man raised the mace high over his head and swung it hard through the air. Judge Parmonter looked up in time to see the spikes a split second before they crashed into his head. The man swung again and again, rearranging the judge's face until there was no longer any symmetry to it.

The man then turned off the television although he didn't know why. He stood facing the judge and felt sickened at what he had done. His eyes were repulsed by the still body in the chair and the blood-splashed mace in his hand. It slid out of his grasp and fell to the floor. He vomited, laid down on the floor and cried.

He heard a noise upstairs, footsteps, then a man's voice—"Sir, are you all right? I heard a loud crash. . . ." The footsteps were closer, coming down the stairs.

The man panicked and ran out the back of the house. He was halfway to his car when he remembered the mace. In that instant he saw the future. They would suspect him, come after him and match his fingers to the mace. He ran back to the house, unsure of any plan, knowing only that the mace held his fate.

At the window again he saw a man in nightclothes, probably a servant, hanging up the phone, staring at the judge's body in horror. And the bloody mace was lying at the judge's feet. Brutal cold metal that would hang him. He had to get it, but how? Kill another man? He stood transfixed, paralyzed with fear. Then in the distance he heard the sirens. He ran into the woods.

When the man's family came to visit him he heard the psychiatrist tell them, "Sorry, there's still no change in his conditon. But we have hopes for him. Sooner or later he'll respond to the treatment." Then the guards escorted the man and his family to the asylum garden. On the manicured lawn his parents and an assortment of in-laws talked to him.

Although the man had no smile on his face, no happy expression, the family took his silence as an answer to their prayers. At least he wasn't violent anymore. And it was easy to see that they wished it weren't like this, that they wished he'd been a baseball player after all, like any other normal person. What they do not realize is that in a place like this, nothing he says will matter because his fate is already decided. In ten years he will be a trustee. In fifteen he will be up for release. If only he would be more receptive.

"But he's been through so much. . . ."

"Once you admit you have a problem then we are on the way to a solution. But you have to take the first step," the psychiatrist told me on his last visit.

He cannot understand that I do not have a condition. That it is all in black and white. My actions were justified. The judge gave up his right to live when he murdered Sarah because of his drunken way of life. And since he was an influential man this shortcoming of his was overlooked by the authorities. The responsibility was up to me and now it is all over.

The psychiatrist wants to go over the symbolism of the weapon again, so I tell him again. There was no symbolism in the mace. It is just a length of metal with two chains on the end. Attached to the chains are two iron balls with spikes. Very popular in Spain, where it came from. Very popular at my house

where I kept it as an ornament. Given to me by a friend who picked it up when he was in the Naval service overseas. When he moved his family to another city in pursuit of a better job he asked me if I wanted it since he was going to throw it out. A simple neighborly gesture. He also gave me an old rocking chair which never killed anyone.

The psychiatrist does not accept this. It just doesn't make sense to him. And he is the one who will fix my mind? Maybe I should try and sell him a bridge.

In a way my white room is nice. Paid for in full by my insurance money, by my lawyer. If you have a lot of money and you kill someone you are temporarily insane. Traumatized. And a little white room will make you good as new. Say in fifteen years or so. If you are poor and you kill someone you are a street viper, an animal. Then you are thrown into a gray room in a penitentiary. Somehow I am not crusading against this inequality.

Fifteen years is a long time though. Especially in a place like this. When they treat you as if you are mad, sooner or later you will act the part. And the thought of getting out of here doesn't exactly lift my spirits. Then I would be in a much larger asylum where judges get drunk, where napalm is manufactured like candy, where subliminal advertising criminals go for your mind, where the politicians deal any way but straight, where meaning has died along with Sarah.

So the man sits in the white room looking for a way out, but not really wanting it, because what is there to do once he's out? And his body and mind ache for Sarah but she is just an image frozen in shattered glass.

The man thinks of what it might be like if things didn't have to turn out like this. But the list of ifs is endless:

If his friend hadn't gone to Spain.

If Sarah didn't want a new quilt.

If the judge wasn't a drunk.

If he could have been close enough to save her.

If, after Sarah, he could find meaning somewhere else besides in a dictionary.

If only he had let the judge live.

The man starts to think hopefully of reincarnation. That maybe he will get a better shake in the next life. Or maybe he will run into Sarah on another plane.

And the mans knows he has nothing left to live for, and that somehow he will die in the white room because he was born on the wrong side of time.

**Bert thought back on the day's events
—the train ride, his friend's disappearing
—trying to figure how
he had come to this unreal desert town.**

NADIGO

by Stanley Cohen

David Klemmer stood at the corner of two streets, shaken with disbelief at how he had come to be there alone. The town was small and flat. He could see the edges of town in all four directions, the faded little houses thinning out into desert. The horizons rippled with heat—exceptional heat for late afternoon in late December. Beyond miles of desert loomed tall bluffs. He was somewhere in Arizona.

The town was old and ugly. Two filling stations, a few parked or slowly moving cars, electric wires, and the black highway with the white line kept the town from being a perfect setting for a Western. The buildings and even the sidewalks were mostly wooden.

The idea had been preposterous from the beginning. He should never have left New York. Three days before, in the rooms they shared on West 123rd Street, he should have shrugged off Bert's invitation. But Bert's glowing word-pictures were more than he had been able to resist.

"The glitter and green of California call," Bert had said. "We leave Wednesday for the Coast."

"Sure, Bert, what I need is a trip to California for the holidays."

But Bert had been serious. And he had the railroad credit card his very rich

brother in California had sent. The winter of 1950 was tightening its grip on New York, and California, some far-off land he had never seen, was a tempting contrast to the nearby rumble of trains and the freezing rain outside. Work or no work, Dave had gone past the point of simply weakening. He continued to voice negative noises but in his own mind he had accepted the invitation and was planning to go.

The train ride had been all Bert had promised—a kaleidoscope of panoramic landscapes. Yet Dave struggled to keep himself tuned in, absorbed in thoughts of his work, suffering guilt for being away from it. Something in his thesis lab work just wasn't right. "Dave's a chemist," he heard Bert say to a quiet, dignified elderly couple across the breakfast table on the third day. "He hates his work so much, that's all he ever thinks about.

"Me, I'm an English major," Bert continued. "We're going to California for the Christmas break. My brother's got an eleven-sided swimming pool." The couple opposite them studied them quietly, listening but seldom speaking. Outside the window a brilliant, diamond-clear Western day was opening up and sweeping by.

Around mid-afternoon Bert became sick and began complaining of excruciating stomach cramps. "We've got to get off this train," he said.

"This train's nonstop the rest of the way, Bert. You'll feel better in a little while. We'll be getting into L.A. soon."

"I've got to get off this train."

"This train doesn't stop around here. We're in the middle of nowhere."

"All trains stop." Still holding his stomach, Bert got up and lurched forward.

"Bert, where're you going? Wait. Maybe there's a doctor on the train." Other passengers began to look at them.

"I'm going to stop the train," Bert answered.

"You can't stop this train," Dave said, starting after him.

"I can stop any train!" He reached the front of the car and reached up for the emergency brake pull.

"No, Bert, no!" Everyone in the car was standing.

Bert grabbed and yanked. Then he dropped into an empty seat and doubled over, holding his stomach.

A conductor burst into the rear of the car and came running up the aisle. "Who the hell pulled the rope?" Passengers began gathering.

"I did," Bert shouted. "Stop the train. I've got to get off." He was rolling

from side to side.

"We're in the middle of the desert," the conductor said.

"He's sick. He needs a doctor," Dave said. "Maybe there's a doctor on the train."

The conductor disappeared and the train continued at a slightly slowed pace. Bert began to moan and continued rolling back and forth on the seat. Passengers gathered around them, offering suggestions and sympathy. Bert practically cursed them back to their seats.

The conductor returned. "There's a small town in about five miles. You sure you want off?"

"Tell 'em to stop," Bert shouted. "We want off."

"What town is it?" Dave asked.

"We're still in Arizona, I think. That's the best I can tell you." The conductor started down the aisle again.

In a few minutes the train began slowing down to a stop, the clean, rhythmic click of wheels starting to grind and grate.

They stepped from the train into choking heat on a side street in a tiny desert town. There was no railroad station. They were wearing winter clothes. Bert was still doubled over, holding his stomach, moaning. Dave carried their two suitcases. He glanced around and led Bert towards a slightly built-up area alongside a black highway with white lines. "C'mon, Bert, that looks like a main drag. We'll find a doctor."

They walked along the street, in front of an auto repair shop and several small, grubby houses and buildings until they came to the highway, obviously the main street of the town. Dave looked around for some indication of the name of the town, some business named after it, a lumberyard, a post office, anything. The buildings were one and two story, mostly wood frame. Fred's Cafe. Davis' Feed Store. General supplies. Across the street a dress shop, Mae's, with a garish, black-glass storefront. A drugstore, Hickman's. About two blocks down, two filling stations on opposite corners of an intersection. Standing alone, surrounded by cars, a small brick A&P.

They walked up on the covered sidewalk and approached a young man, perhaps their age, a handsome boy with steel-blue eyes, wavy hair, and neat shirt and slacks. "Could you tell us where we can find a doctor?" Dave asked.

The boy was leaning against a post with a match in his mouth. He straightened up and removed the match. "You two just get off the train? First time I ever saw it stop."

"My friend got sick on the train. Could you tell us where there's a doctor?"

"Sure, we got one. Old Doc Finger. He'll take care of him."

"Where's he at?"

He pointed down the covered walk. "About six doors down. There's his shingle hanging. Go up the steps."

"Thanks. Incidentally, what town is this?"

"You'd better get your friend on over to Doc Finger's. He looks like he's feeling pretty bad." The handsome boy turned and walked away.

Dave and Bert walked up the steps to a little foyer. A door to the left of the foyer led into a dingy, crowded waiting room. They went in, found two empty chairs and sat down. Bert was pitched forward in too much pain to remain quiet. Dave did what he could to calm him, finally slumping back to match stares with the other patients, all older men. There was no receptionist, no nurse, no sign of the doctor or of any activity. As Dave stared at the other men who sat quietly, his mind blurred for a moment and he imagined that the other men were derelicts, rather like sunken boats in low water, one missing an arm, another a leg, an eye, or an ear or a nose, even an entire face. One man had a four-inch hole in his chest through which the back of the chair was visible. For an instant he thought he heard a train. He shook his head to clear it and his thoughts wandered back to his thesis work. He cringed.

"If you hate chemistry so much, why don't you get out of it?" Bert often said.

"I've gone too far to turn back. Besides, what else could I do?"

He felt a need and nudged Bert. "Looks like it's going to be a few minutes. I'm gonna go look for a head. Be back." He turned to the man sitting to the other side of him. "Excuse me. Can you tell me where the nearest men's room is?"

The man thought a minute. "Don't know. Probably the back of the bar and grill across the street."

Dave reached the street and looked for a bar and grill. Probably Fred's Cafe. He crossed and went in. It was empty and hot and the air was heavy with beer and fried food. The heat was beginning to get to him. The waiting room had been hot. He walked straight to the back of the room and found a door marked "MEN." The air in the tiny cubicle was almost unbearable. There was no basin in which to wash his hands.

He headed out, saying "Thanks" to a man in a white paper cap and filthy white apron behind the cash register.

"Come back," the man answered.

As he reached the street, he thought about the crowd in the waiting room and wandered into the drugstore, over to the magazine rack. He stood for a few minutes, thumbing through magazines, became absorbed in an article and squatted to read it. He read another, and realizing some time had passed, dropped the magazine and walked back to the doctor's office. As he headed up the narrow wooden staircase he found a padlocked folding lattice across the foyer. It was like the steel grillwork in front of stores in New York City. Beyond it, the door to the doctor's office was closed, the glass window dark. He went up to the lattice and shook it.

Back on the street, wondering where Bert could be, he spotted the boy who had directed them to the doctor. Dave hailed him and trotted over to him. "You haven't seen my friend, have you? You know, the one I got off the train with."

The handsome boy grinned at him. "Why? Should I have?" The boy's eyes were so clear blue it was like staring through two holes in his head at the sky beyond.

"I left him in the doctor's office and went out for a few minutes. The place was full of patients. When I got back, the place was locked up."

"Doc Finger's quick. Good hands."

"But where could they have gone? My friend was sick. Is there a hospital?"

"Nearest thing like a hospital is ninety miles. Your friend's probably well now and around someplace looking for you. Doc Finger's pretty good."

"Incidentally, why does he have that steel fence?"

"He keeps some strong medicine up there. Kids broke in a couple of times."

"Where could I find Doc Finger now?"

"Maybe home if he didn't go hunting."

"Thanks. Incidentally, what's the name of this town?"

"You'd better quit worrying about a little thing like that and find your buddy, seems to me," he said with his persistent, unwarm grin. Then he walked off.

Dave looked up and down the highway. There wasn't much activity and he didn't see Bert anywhere. He could see to the horizon and would spot Bert if he were standing in a crowd five miles away. He went back into the drugstore and asked the old pharmacist if he could use the phone to call Doc Finger.

"His office is just across the street."

"I just came from there. Place is all locked up." Dave told his story for the

old man.

"Sure, help yourself to the phone. Just pick it up and ask Annamarie, that's the operator, for Doc's house."

After several rings, a sullen woman's voice answered.

"I'm looking for Doctor Finger. Are you Mrs. Finger?"

"Yeah, I'm his wife, 'n' he ain't here. Call him at his office." She answered as if she couldn't possibly imagine any other approach, as if no one had ever called for him at home before.

Dave reviewed his story for her. "Has he called you or said anything about my friend or about taking him to the hospital or anything like that?"

"I ain't heard from him since this morning. Said he might go huntin' when he got through this afternoon."

"Thanks just the same." Dave hung up, looked helplessly at the old druggist and went back out into the street. Sunset was approaching and the town was getting uglier as the light changed. He began to realize that he was dependent on Bert and the credit card, that he was in the middle of a nowhere of strangers with remarkably little money. He clutched at his pants pocket to make sure that at least his wallet was still there. He walked back to the intersection of the highway and the street where they had gotten off the train. Surveying the town, he saw he could walk in and out of every public place in the town in thirty minutes. He had to find Bert.

He stepped into Davis' Feed Store and the sweet, heavy smell of sacks of grain hit him. There were farm tools, a rack of rifles, counters stacked with men's work clothing and two small-screen televisions. He smiled at the proprietor and left.

Black's Men's Shop, one of the few nonwooden buildings. He asked the proprietor if a stranger, and he described Bert, had been in.

The man laughed sarcastically. No. Nobody fitting that description. Dave flushed with intense dislike for the man and walked out. He looked in at a brightly lit, well-stocked appliance store. There was only one person in the store. He stepped inside the dress shop, Mae's, and looked around. A fat proprietress with wild, artificially blue-white hair and heavy makeup approached him. He quickly walked out.

He spotted the red white and blue of a revolving barber pole. An arrow pointed up a flight of stairs. SWEETS BROTHERS TONSORIAL PARLOR. He walked up the steps and through swinging doors into the sweetish stench of barbers' tonics and preparations. Five barber chairs were full and some ten or twelve young men sat in chairs ringing the room. They talked, waiting. This

room, with the thick layer of matted hair covering the floor, was clearly one of the town's popular gathering spots. Dave noticed a striking similarity among three of the barbers. The Sweets Brothers. As he looked at them, their similarity, except for height, grew more remarkable. One was short, one medium, one tall but their identical heads were covered with thin, blond, almost nonexistent hair and their faces were pinkish and boyish and bright-lipped and they had matching, incredibly sweet, smiling countenances as they chatted with their particular customers of the moment and with each other. Dave turned and walked out. As he ran down the steps towards fresh air, he thought he heard the fading sound of a distant train.

When he reached the street, he ran into the handsome blue-eyed boy. "I just thought I heard a train."

The boy shook his head no. "Only passes through once a day and you were on it. You must be hearing things. You look like you just saw a ghost."

"That barber shop up there."

"The Sweets boys?" the boy grinned. "Yeah, they're some matched set. Find your friend yet?"

"Does it look like it?"

"Try the A&P. Maybe he wanted to pick up a few things."

Dave studied the boy for a moment. "Tell me something. What do you do for a living? You work at something? Go to school? Or do you just stand around and help tourists?"

The boy continued grinning. "I ride the range on my trusty steed." He pointed at a '49 Ford parked on the street.

"Is that all?"

"Why? Isn't that enough? You like what you do any better?"

"You don't hang your whole life on doing something you don't want any part of," Dave remembered Bert saying once.

Dave walked away from him and crossed back to the drugstore. "Like to use your phone again," he mumbled at the old pharmacist. "I'd like to call the hospital."

"Have to charge you fifty cents. That's long distance. Just ask the girl for the hospital."

A voice mouthed, "something Hospital," after one ring.

"I'd like to know if you have checked in a new patient there in the last couple of hours. A patient of Doctor Finger's."

"What's the patient's name?'

Dave told her, and spelled Bert's last name.

"I'm sorry. Doctor Finger has no patients here at this time."

"Would you just check the name to be sure?" Dave spelled it again.

"There's no one here by that name. Sorry."

Dave paid the pharmacist and walked out into the street. He crossed an intersection to the red-brick A&P. He stepped inside and for a moment felt surrounded by normalcy. It was like all A&Ps, bustling with housewives, boys in white aprons, aisle after aisle of brightly displayed groceries. For a moment in the more familiar surroundings he felt more secure and a little hungry. He paced the area just behind the checkout, looking up and down each aisle. He went down the last aisle and into the open area in front of the meat display. Bert wasn't in there, but then, why should he be? Why possibly? But where was he? His momentary sense of security faded. Doc Finger was apparently his only lead and where was Doc Finger?

He went back out into the street. The town's two filling stations were at the next corner, one closed. He went into the other, which wasn't busy.

"You haven't by any chance seen a stranger in a gray jacket and gray pants, maybe with two suitcases?"

"Friend of yours?" the attendant asked.

"Yeah. Can't see why he would have come out this way but I'm looking everywhere. We got off the train when he got sick and——"

The attendant jumped up and dashed out to pump gas for a car that had just pulled in. Then another rolled in. "Haven't seen him," the attendant shouted, looking back at Dave.

Dave walked out to the street and looked towards the edge of town. The highway was flanked on each side by houses. Several hundred yards out stood a small horizontal white sign on a white post. A town name sign, maybe. Dave started walking towards it and then broke into a trot. The sign was farther away than it had appeared. He finally reached it. In the rapidly dimming light, he read:

Nadigo, Arizona
pop. 1230

He turned and walked back towards town. The filling station attendant had two cars. The A&P was closed. He suddenly felt very frightened. It was nearly dark. He had less than seven dollars. He went into Fred's Cafe and found the handsome boy sitting along in a booth, a bottle of beer and a glass in front of him. "Nadigo," Dave said, walking over to him.

"Sure. Why not?" the boy answered.

"Where's the town's sheriff?"

"He went to Phoenix today," the boy grinned.

"Well, isn't there any other police protection in the town? A . . . a deputy or something?"

"Springer went with him. He wouldn't miss a trip to Phoenix."

"Suppose something happened around here."

"Nothing much ever happens here. The sheriff'd take care of it when he got back."

"Nothing happens? My friend sure as hell disappeared."

"He probably just left. Got well and left," the boy grinned.

"How? You said there's no train stop."

"Could've taken a bus. Bus comes through twice a day, once around suppertime. Could've also hitched a ride."

"I haven't seen any buses."

"They come through. They don't usually stop unless you call Mason City. I guess you could flag them down, though."

"Is there a Western Union in this town?"

"Doc Hickman's."

"What about a post office?"

"Doc Hickman's, too."

Dave remembered seeing a barred window in the back of the drugstore which, as he thought about it, was marked for mail. He was hungry but as he stood in the restaurant, the foul smell discouraged any thought of buying food there. Then, too, he had very little money and wondered how long it would have to last. He glanced at the cash register and the candy display. He decided to have a candy bar, a big, double, coconut Mounds, and he began salivating at the prospect. He walked over, bought one, went out into the air and opened it. It was stale, very stale, thick, dry, chewy. But he ate it.

He went back to the drugstore. "I don't suppose my friend's been in here," he said. The old druggist shook his head. "Just thought I'd ask. Gimme a Hershey bar," he said, taking one, "and let me use your phone again." The candy was fresher than the first one. He called Doc Finger's house.

"No, I ain't heard from him yet."

"Well, when he gets in, would you aks him to call Hickman's."

"I close at ten," the old man said.

"I suppose," the woman said, "if I'm still up."

Dave tried to reconstruct the day's events, to make some sense out of the situation. It was inconceivable that Bert could have left without him. But where

was he? Perhaps he was seriously ill, too sick for the hospital ninety miles away. Perhaps Doc Finger had to take him somewhere better, farther away. He was sorry he hadn't stayed in New York. But what would Bert have done without him on the train? It was good he had come along. But then, why had he left Bert alone for so long to read a couple of crummy magazine articles? Bert had needed him and he hadn't been around. Or *could* Bert have left?

Dave picked up the phone again. "Operator, I want to place a collect call to Mr. or Mrs. Herman Klemmer in Macon, Georgia. My name is David Klemmer."

He listened to his sleepy mother respond to the phone call. She wasn't used to getting calls that late. There was a three- or four-hour time difference. A long-distance, collect call from Arizona? From David?

"David? Is that you, son?"

"Hello, Ma."

"Will you accept the charges?" asked an operator somewhere along the line.

"David? Is that you?" she shouted. Long distances are always shouted. "Are you all right? Where are you?"

The line went dead. The operator must have been getting Mrs. Klemmer's assurance that she would accept the charges. She had so little experience with these matters, especially on being roused out of sleep.

The line opened again. "Hello? Hello? David, is that you? Are you all right?" she shouted.

"Hello, Ma. Now listen, I'm fine, but I need your help."

"David, where are you? The operator said Arizona?"

"Ma, please listen a minute and I'll try and explain. I'm fine. If you'll let me talk a minute, I know it sounds crazy, but I can explain. You know my roommate? You know, that I've written you about? Bert? Well, he's got a rich brother in Hollywood and we were going out to visit him during vacation and——"

"Hollywood? David, you don't have money to go to Hollywood."

"Ma, let me finish. It wouldn't have cost much of anything. Bert's brother has all kinds of connections. The problem is that Bert has both railroad passes and he got sick on the train so we got off in this little town so Bert could see a doctor and now Bert's disappeared and I may need money——"

"Disappeared? What do you mean disappeared? Where is he? David, is everything . . . are you all right?"

"Ma, if I knew where he was, I'd go to him. I left him with the doctor for a

minute and when I got back he was gone. . . .''

''Where? Ask the doctor.''

''Ma, the doctor's gone, too. He went hunting, or something. I didn't want to call and alarm you but I need your help. You've got to wire me some money, right now, just in case I'm lost from Bert.''

''David . . . is someone there with you . . . forcing you?''

''Ma, I promise you, everything is okay. I know this whole thing sounds crazy but it's just like I told you. I'm going to keep looking for Bert. But just in case I can't find him, go down to Western Union and wire me some money. Just send it to me, care of Western Union, Nadigo, Arizona. I'm in the Western Union office.''

''David, it's late. Your father and I are in bed. We were asleep.''

''Ma, I need your help. I'm all alone in this little town. I'm stranded, You've got to send me some money.''

''How much money do you need?''

He thought a minute. ''You'd better send me two hundred dollars. I may need enough to get back to New York and I don't know what the fare is. And I have to look for Bert.''

''We don't have that much at home. We'll go to the bank tomorrow. . . .''

''Get it from Uncle Max. He's always got that much. The son of a bitch is loaded. Wake him up if you have to and get it from him. Just send it to me care of Western Union in Nadigo, Arizona. That's N-A-D-I-G-O. I'll be waiting right here in the Western Union office. Now Ma, they close this office at ten and it's eight-thirty here. Did you get the town, N-A-D-I-G-O?''

She sighed. ''I've got it all. We'll manage. David? David——''

He put the phone down gently, as if the least disruption might make something go wrong. He looked at Doc Hickman who had been watching him from behind the cash register. The old man smiled with quiet concern but said nothing. He only smiled and observed. He was the image of all the old Docs in all the drugstores Dave had ever seen.

''Nothing to do now but wait,'' Dave said.

The old man continued smiling.

Dave walked back over to the magazine display and squatted down on a low shelf of magazines to occupy himself while waiting. He watched the old pharmacist move into the back of the store to work. He glanced at the clock. He thought about his mother calling her brother, Max, waking him with a story about her son, David. The college boy, Max would say, the scientist, like some kind of crazy person, stranded in some little town, without money. Where? In

Arizona? He tried to submerge himself in a magazine but the words ran together and he turned page after page, staring blankly at pictures, frequently glancing up at the clock and in the direction of the old pharmacist, expecting him every minute to come walking forward with his perpetual smile and money for David.

As the clock edged past nine-thirty, Dave took the phone and placed a long-distance collect call home. There was no answer. Perhaps the weather was bad there. Perhaps they had had car trouble, maybe even an accident. Ordinarily, Dave always went to great lengths to avoid being a burden. He thought for a moment about Bert's whereabouts and his face grew hot with fear. He thought about his own thesis work and another flush of heat swept through him. He wandered back to the magazines and squatted back down.

He watched the clock and waited for some sign of activity from Doc Hickman. There had been no customers in the store for some time. His parents had had time, plenty of time. He had stressed time. Don't telegrams travel with the speed of electricity in a wire? As the clock approached ten minutes of ten he went back to the phone and placed the collect call again. His mother answered and quickly accepted charges. She was more experienced now. "David? Where are you?"

"Ma, you know where I am. Where's the money?"

"The man at Western Union says there's no such place. He had a book and he said it had every Western Union office everywhere and he said there's no such place as Nadigo, Arizona."

"But Ma, that's crazy. I'm standing here. He must have made a mistake. Did you spell it right?"

"I wrote it down. N-A-D-I-G-O, Arizona. I even tried calling you there at Western Union but the telephone operator said the same thing. She said there's no such place. David, are you sure you're all right?"

"Look Ma, I'm talking to you from here . . . what did the operator say when she asked you to accept my call?"

She paused a moment. "She asked if I would accept a call from you from Nadigo, Arizona."

"Ma, now listen. It's too late to do anything tonight but first thing in the morning. . . ." Dave glanced towards the back of the store. The old man was turning off lights. "First thing tomorrow, go back to Western Union and don't take 'No' for an answer. It's N as in nowhere, N-A-D-I-G-O, Nadigo, Arizona. You've got to do it, Ma."

"Where are you going to sleep tonight? Will you be all right?"

"I'll be fine. Just send me the money in the morning. Okay? I've got to go

now, Ma."

Dave hung up and walked out onto the planked walk with the pharmacist. The old man locked the door. "Guess I'll see you in the morning," Dave said. The old man nodded, smiled, and disappeared around the corner, leaving Dave very much alone. Dave looked up and down the totally deserted street. There was no automobile traffic. The buildings were all dark. A few widely spaced street lights produced splotches of dirty illumination. Where would he wait till morning? He was suddenly overcome by terror. He wanted to cry out for Bert, for any friendly face. He turned round and round, staring helplessly in all directions at the desolation that contained him. The blue-eyed boy with the cold smile who always appeared when he had a question—where was he now?

He glanced at Doc Finger's dangling shingle. He could barely make out the stairwell leading up to his office. Doc Finger had seen Bert. He was the last link with Bert. Dave crossed the road and walked towards Doc Finger's. He would wait there for him, at his door, taking no chances on missing him the next morning. He climbed the stairs in the dim light that leaked in from the street. The landing was hot and dark, almost pitch black.

Dave took off his jacket and slumped down into the corner where the steel fence met the wall. Below him the doorway onto the wooden sidewalk glowed in the darkness like the square mouth of a cave or a mine.

He began to think about his work, about what he'd done last and what he'd do next. He could almost smell the air of his lab sweet with chemicals. This was a sensation he liked, wasn't it? He did look forward to a lifetime of solvents searing the inside of his nose and cracking the skin on his fingers, didn't he? What choice did he have? The face of the blue-eyed boy with the cold grin suddenly appeared in his thoughts. "I ride the range on my trusty steed. Do you like what you do any better?"

Bert drifted back into his mind as he sat in the darkness, staring at the door below. He felt guilty and tried to retreat farther into his little corner of floor, wall, and steel fence. He closed his eyes and Gorman moved into his mind. Professor Gorman and the indecipherable molecular models on the lecture bench. "Do something else, Dave. Chemistry's obviously not for you." "But Bert, I'm already in graduate school. It's too late." "It's not too late, Dave. Don't you understand? It's *not* too late."

The boy with the blue eyes crossed his mind. Then Nadigo's main street. Yes, Nadigo. It was warm in Nadigo. It was cold in New York. Cold and damp. Nadigo was warm and dry. He thought about his parents going to Uncle Max. . . .No! Not back to Uncle Max for more money! Let Max keep his lousy

money. . . .

The doorway below was the slate gray of dawn. He had been asleep. He raised his cramped body and stretched and walked slowly down the steps. The street was still deserted. He sat down on the wooden steps at the edge of the street to watch the town wake up. The early morning air was crystalline. The monumental bluffs seemed a short drive away.

He waited and watched. The day gradually warmed and brightened. A man in work clothes, the first person of the new day, walked by and nodded. A car moved slowly by. Mr. Davis opened his feed store. More cars passed. The lights were on in Fred's Cafe across the street and the slight scent of bacon that reached Dave was sweet, as sweet as he had ever smelled. Old Doc Hickman smiled and waved as though he had seen Dave there every day. The town was fully alive and the sun warm. The A&P and the filling stations had traffic.

The little black Ford pulled up in Front of Dave and the boy with sky-blue eyes smiled "Find your friend?" His smile was suddenly warmer, more sincere.

"I don't need to find him anymore."

"What about you? You planning to go back?"

"What for? I like it here."

"A little later, why don't we go out for a ride? Ride the range. Pretty country around here. I'll show you sights you can't see back East."

"I'd like that. I'd really like that."

"Meet you in half an hour up at Sweets," the blue-eyed boy said. "I need a haircut. Wait for me up there." The boy pulled the Ford away from the wooden sidewalk and moved down the street.

Dave glanced towards the stairway to Sweets. The barber pole was turning. He sat in the sun for a few more minutes and then walked up to the barbershop. All five barber chairs were occupied and most of the ring of waiting chairs were full. Dave went over to an empty one and sat down.

While he was waiting, a young man came in, somewhat in a hurry, an intense, dark-haired young man wearing winter clothes. His facial expression was harried, unnerved. He looked around as though looking for someone. He walked over to the closest of the Sweets brothers. "Did a friend of mine come in here? Guy named Dave Klemmer? He was about so tall and was——"

"Look around," Sweets interrupted. "See if he's here."

The young man slowly scanned the faces of everyone in the shop. Dave smiled as the stranger's scanning eyes touched him and moved on. Dave continued to smile for a moment or two as he watched the young man complete his scan and hurry back down the steps to continue his search.

Krim slid off the couch, reaching for his snub-nosed weapon. As the door opened, he saw the tall lean figure of a woman.

THE LADY

by Phil Berger

I

It was a large airy room. The dining table was by a window with a view of Central Park West. Along one wall was a lighted display case that held the stereo system, a few books, and a collection of Tang dynasty pottery horses. There was a tufted leather love seat and a Tabriz carpet as well.

Beryl James was found at the table in a Breuer dining chair. A thirtyish blonde with delicate high-anglo looks, she was wearing a fuschia-colored negligee. Her head was thrown back, mouth agape. The bruise along her neck indicated she'd been strangled.

The table was Sheraton mahogany. On it were candles in cut-glass crystal holders, two coffee cups in matching saucers, two linen napkins and a bowl of fruits. The coffee was cold when Carillo and Lynch, from 20th precinct, got there.

There were no signs of struggle or any indications that valuables had been taken. Except for the Sunday *New York Times* on the carpet, everything was in place. The apartment was impeccable. The impression was that the assailant had been on familiar terms with Beryl James.

But there was a strange note. On the ottoman by the love seat were two index cards that had been typed on. One of them said:

complacencies of the peignoir
& late coffee & oranges in a
sunny chair

—words the detectives saw no significance in beyond the apparent connection to the murder.

The other card had a name on it:

Harry Krim.

That one was no mystery for Carillo and Lynch. They knew the man—a private eye.

Harry Krim was a tall sinewy man with whorls of dark curly hair and a high-cheekboned face whose large obsidian eyes and generous mouth made him look younger than his thirty-three years.

Krim kept an office just south of Greenwich Village on Sixth Avenue and lived above it in a high-ceilinged spacious flat. If Krim had a connection with Beryl James, it wasn't in interior decor. His place, with well-worn sofas and lounge chairs and tacky carpets, was not likely to end up in the rotogravure section of the Sunday *Times*. It had a lived-in quality, though, with walls that were covered by movie posters, sports pennants, and abstract water colors of

willowy nudes. There were shelves and shelves of books.

The detectives from the 20th precinct had been there before. At one time or another they'd had business with Krim on cases. Now they were having him account for his whereabouts over the past twenty-four hours, the questions phrased in a way to let him know it was a routine check, no more.

Carillo was a thin stoop-shouldered man with a pencil mustache and narrow remote eyes. He had a furtive manner and seemed always poised to steal a glance over his shoulder. The jittery quality sometimes affected his speech. Thoughts got jammed. Occasionally he stammered on the first word before speech flowed.

His partner, Lynch, was a ruddy and rotund man, and in manner quite opposite. He was a sunny sort, with the easy camaraderie of a saloon regular. He carried himself with a gingery step that belied his weight. Together, the two reminded Krim of Abbott and Costello.

"From a poem," Krim said, examining the card Lynch showed him.

"That right?" said Lynch.

"W-what one?" asked Carillo.

"I'm not sure, not sure. I'd have to think."

"Is there," asked Lynch, "anything . . . uh——"

"Helpful? Not offhand. I mean, it's stating the obvious, it seems, doesn't it?"

"What do I know, Harold," said Lynch. "I'm no *cum laude*. I'm a gumshoe."

" 'Complacencies of the peignoir and late coffee and oranges in a sunny chair,' " Krim read. "It's the scenario, man. But there must be more."

"And what do you make," asked Carillo, showing the card with Krim's name on it, "of that?"

"That I'm connected in some oblique way. Was there . . . a typewriter with a matching face in her place?"

"Negative," said Carillo.

"Then . . . then it means he . . . probably had it with him all along. Which means murder was premeditated."

Lynch squinted one eye as he considered. "It's like some kind of game with him," he said. "You know?"

"I'm inclined to agree," said Krim, pacing up and back.

"W-which brings us to the quiff."

"Beryl James, you mean."

Carillo nodded. Krim gestured to the couch. He took their London Fogs,

put them on a clothes rack he'd bought dirt cheap at a Salvation Army store. They sat.

"I knew Beryl for awhile," Krim said. "Met her by chance, actually. Around Christmastime, oh . . . maybe two years ago. Outside Brentano's, Fifth Avenue. She was, I remember, loaded down with gifts from all the best places on the Avenue. Bendel's, Tiffany's, so on and so forth.

"She walked out the store just ahead of me. Her heel to the shoe broke off. She stumbled. I caught her by the arm and was delighted to see what fate had done for me."

He told how he'd carried her packages to the curb, where she'd hailed a taxi. He shared the ride, claiming he was going her way, an invention of course. On the way uptown, they talked and found each other's company agreeable. She invited him up for a drink. One thing led to another.

"You stayed for the night, Harold?" Lynch asked.

"That's right."

"A weekday?" Carillo wondered.

"A Saturday," said Krim, failing to see why it mattered.

"Neither of you . . . had prior engagements?"

"Ah. Yes. Yes, I get it. That's strange. I forgot all about it. We both did. Both had prior . . . fact is, we each phoned up our respective——"

"You don't remember who the guy was that she——"

"Um . . . lemme see . . . long name. Same as the race car driver."

"Foyt?"

"Nah. Long name. Dallenbach. That's it. Roger Dallenbach."

Carillo jotted the name into a notepad. "Know anything about him?"

"Worked on Wall Street. Burnham Bines and . . . is it Dahlgren?"

"Think so," said Carillo. "I'll run it down. Is there more about her?"

"Beryl was nice enough. Attractive, pleasant. From money. Knew books, art, music. But was somehow . . . I don't know . . . it was as though a piece was missing. Some spontaneous ingredient. To me she seemed a practiced beauty. Well brought up. By the numbers, kind of. You getting a picture?"

They nodded, but Harry Krim wasn't sure he'd made his point clear. "I thought," he said, "maybe it had to do with the strange circumstances of our meeting. That she felt odd about it. Or whatever. You know the feeling? How the body you've been bumper to bumper with can suddenly seem foreign. But that disassociated quality about her was there quite a few Sunday mornings after. For me at least."

"W-what the hell's all that," asked Carillo, "got to do with homicide?"

"Beats me," said Harry Krim.

After they left, he lay on the couch and thought about the death of Beryl James.

It made no sense to him—starting with Beryl herself. She was hardly the sort to rouse the fever that would make a man lock his fingers irrevocably around her lovely neck.

Or was that an opinion peculiarly his own? Could be. To others, Beryl might have been an inscrutable beauty they'd tried—and failed—to interest. And in the failure the seeds of malevolence were sown. Who could say?

Krim knew of women who varied with the man—mild and amenable to one, hard and shrewish to another. And while he doubted Beryl was this type, it was possible. It left a few other factors unexplained. The most troubling was the introduction of his name into the murder. Why would anyone want to involve him? It seemed unlikely that a man so shrewd with poetic detail would use Harry Krim in so heavy-handed a way and expect crime experts to buy it.

Suppose, though, subtlety was of no concern to the murderer—he simply wanted to make Harry Krim's life more difficult for reasons only he knew. If so, it'd worked. As Krim lay in the darkness of his flat, he could think of nothing else.

He doubted Wall Street was back of it, though—far too easy to trace. More likely, he feared, there was another lover of hers that Beryl had never mentioned. He tried to imagine how this phantom figure might think. Assume this guy knew that Beryl saw and slept with Harry Krim—perhaps she even used it to kill off his ardor for her—was it far-fetched to suppose that once he decided to kill her he'd want to entangle the lover as well?

But would it stop there? Much as Harry Krim regretted the demise of Beryl James, it was over and done with. And it was the strangler's next step he had to consider.

Christ Jesus. What if the card with his name on it was meant not as a clue but rather as a portent, a homicidal tease? The thought made him uneasy.

Just then he heard a scratch at the door. He slid silently off the couch, reaching under it for his snub-nosed weapon. He heard a key move in the lock and, as the door opened, saw silhouetted the tall lean figure of a woman.

"Harry?"

It was Annie: his Chinalady, seventy-two inches high, with long jet black hair, who looked as though she'd stepped out of *Terry and the Pirates*.

"Here," he said.

"Y'okay?"

"Uh huh."

She shut the door and moved in the dark to a corner of the room. She struck a match and lit a candle. In the dim light, she began to undress. She grew accustomed to the dark and soon made out the features of his face.

"Everything all right?" she asked.

"On your end it is."

He slid the gun under the couch, not latching it against the framework, though: just in case. She snuggled in next to him; her body had the chill of mid-February on it, and he rubbed against it until he felt her warm.

"What's the matter, babe?" she asked.

He told her what. She listened, and guessed what had occurred.

"A jealous suitor?"

"Who didn't suit her," he said.

"It's not all either."

"Meaning?"

"That you ought to check out the poem more."

"I would. But I can't . . . can't place it."

"Really? I'm surprised."

"That mean you can?"

"Uh huh. What'll you give me to tell you?"

"The franchise to a Chinese laundry."

"Prick."

"Sticks 'n stones."

"I've denied my body to men for less."

"How much less?"

"Not much."

"I'm aghast," he said. "Listen. About the——"

"Poem?"

"Mmm."

"Try Wallace Stevens."

He started to raise up, but she wouldn't let him.

"But," she said, reaching for his zipper, "Try me first."

The phone startled them out of deep sleep. He reached for the receiver but realized he wasn't in bed. He and Annie lay on the carpet, naked in each other's arms.

He twisted about to locate the clock. It was past noon already. He got up and went to the phone.

"You sleeping, Harold?" Lynch asked.

"Just reading a copy of *Watchtower*."

"Say hallelujah."

"That's the spirit. What's up?"

No lead to speak of. Beryl James' broker friend was clean. Solid alibi. Worse, neither the night nor the day doorman at James' building had seen the deceased or a man going to her apartment. They guessed the couple entered the premises by car, parked in the basement, and then took the elevator up. That speculation was sound, for investigation had disclosed that Beryl James' keys and car were gone, used apparently by the killer to make good his escape.

"What about the poem?" Lynch asked.

"Called *Sunday Morning*. By Wallace Stevens."

"You, uh, check it?"

"Not yet. Got waylaid. But I will. I'll let you know later if there's anything there that would help."

"Just one sordid detail to add," said Lynch.

"What's that?"

"Medical examiner said that not long before she was strangled the deceased had intercourse, probably with our cultured killer. No signs of forced entry either."

"It's what you call a thorough screwing."

"I guess that's about right."

II

The ceiling was sixteen feet high, spaciousness accentuated by a wall covered top to bottom with mirrors, by whose reflection the killer might have caught Elizabeth Carey's final panic-stricken moments.

She was found prone on the Berber rug, facing the unadorned fireplace shaft. A very tall young woman with long chestnut-brown hair, she had a full curvaceous mouth and breathtaking bone structure and a figure that could recommend necrophilia. She was naked except for a silver anklet of—it turned out—her own design. A feathered nightie lay crumpled by the large plant in the rattan basket. She'd been strangled.

There were no indications the assailant was a stranger or that he'd rummaged for valuables. The semen stains on her buttocks suggested he'd had intercourse and some time after ejaculation (probably right after) he'd murdered the Carey woman.

The killer hadn't the problem of being seen here. The building, in the West

Eighties, employed no doorman or elevator operator. He'd strangled her and left, presumably by the stairwell rather than the elevator. At least it was what Carillo and Lynch theorized. A minor point, really.

Of more concern was what he'd meant by the index cards he'd left behind again, the contents of which were intended, apparently, to elaborate on what he'd done. If so, their meaning eluded Lynch and Carillo.

that perches in the soul & sings
the tune without the words & never
stops at all

was what had been typed on one card, words that described nothing that the detectives could see. In Beryl James' case, the snatch of fancified prose connected (or seemed to connect) to visible reality. This "clue" didn't. They sensed, though, that for an investigator with a more scholarly bent it might.

It led to the other card—on which was an address. No surprise—it was the Sixth Avenue location of the private eye, Harry Krim.

Lynch showed him the typed words that neither he nor Carillo could figure.

Krim stared at them and closed his eyes, a pained expression on his face.

"Mean something to you, Harold?"

Krim nodded. "Yeah. It's Emily Dickinson." He read aloud: " 'that perches in the soul and sings the tune without the words and never stops at all."

Carillo shook his head. "I-I-I don't see what it's got to do with the woman."

"It's what's not there that's the clue, Peter," said Krim.

"Come again?"

"The line that precedes these words. It goes, 'Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul. . . .' "

"I'm still not——"

"The victim didn't use Elizabeth," said Krim. "She preferred her middle name."

"Hope?"

"Everybody knew her by that. Hope Carey. Not Elizabeth."

"Jesus, he's——"

"Jerking us off," Krim agreed. "It's a big joke to him. A poem about hope that he inverts to its opposite state, strangling the hope out of her. Hope the person to him is a thing, a part of his binge."

"And," said Lynch, eye closed to focus his thought, "there was the feathered nightie by the body. He must be pretty ticked about something."

"Or just bananas," Carillo said. "Tell me about Elizabeth Carey."

"You've seen her," said Krim. "She was beautiful. Very natural. Like her place—elegant but understated. Knew what she wanted and got it. Or did it. Always with grace. Not one of the boorish lib types.

"She was a jewelry designer. Mostly sterling silver accessories. She was in and out of the city a lot. Shuttled between here and a farmhouse she was restoring in New Hampshire—no, Vermont. She was very clever at that sort of thing. I think she studied interior design in Italy. I'm not sure on that. You could check it, I suppose.

"Anyway, I first met her at a loft party in SoHo, if memory serves. Big punchbowl. Wine. Cheeses. Soft music. She was leaving for New Hamp—I mean, Vermont—the next day. At the time she was seeing a reporter for the *Times*. Political beat. He spent a lot of hours in Albany. She told me about him up top, which I thought was kind of admirable. Myself, I'm a helluva lot more devious. Anyway, we went home together and saw each other when and if . . . you know what I mean. It was nice. Casual but always agreeable."

"Is there," asked Lynch, "anything James and Carey had in common?"

"Not really. Not that I can think of."

"So what does that give us?"

"A guy who likes to work with his hands," said Carillo.

It was no laughing matter, though. The news later was not encouraging. The *Times* reporter Hope Carey had known was accounted for. The same could not be said for the source of the identical set of fingerprints found in the apartment of both victims. A check on them failed to turn up a name. It meant the killer had no record. It meant they were back to block one.

As he lay on his couch, Krim tried to figure what sort of man this was, and just what had incited him. It appeared he was an individual who found his link to Krim gratifying. And had a woman problem to boot.

The problem Harry Krim had was how to keep another murder from happening. For starters, he decided to get Annie out of the city and under the watchful eye of a retired New York detective he knew in Florida. He made the arrangements and then had his secretary, Ruth Parks, drop by his address.

She was puzzled, naturally, by the late hour of the call. He explained as succinctly as he could what had happened and what he wanted her to do. It came to this: she was to phone every woman in his address book and advise them of the situation and what precautions to take. He wanted her to keep a record of the calls so at a glance he'd know which of them had not been advised and the

reason why.

As Annie slept he lay on the couch, ready to be of aid to Ruth Parks if she needed it. But Ruth was up to the task, and he dozed fitfully, too worried, really, to lose himself in sleep. Towards morning, he gave up any further idea of it. He shaved and showered as Ruth systematically doubled back on numbers she'd been unable to reach. There were twenty-odd names that had not been at their phone or had had it disconnected.

He woke Annie and, while she showered, put out fruits, grains, and milk for all of them. Ruth went home to sleep and promised to return if he needed her. He and Annie waited for a cab. From Sixth Avenue, the hackie drove them to LaGuardia. He saw her to the security gate.

"This is it, Jewboy," she said, winking.

They hugged, kissed, looked each other over.

"It's like Confucius says."

She gave an inquiring nod.

He shrugged. "He said it in Chinese."

"Take a guess."

"I dunno. 'Go light on the MSG'?"

She turned and headed away, blowing a kiss over her shoulder.

He caught a cab back to the city. He was exhausted, he'd slept a few raggedy hours. His mind was racing. A hundred and one details to sort through. It was driving him half crazy. He looked forward to real sleep.

He paid the driver and stood on Sixth Avenue for a moment, breathing deeply. It was another unseasonably mild day. The temperatures would, he guessed, reach the high fifties.

There was mail in his box—magazines and letters jammed into an impossibly narrow space. He twisted and twisted until the rolled-up bundle "gave." As he put the key to the lock of the street-level entry door, he thumbed through the mail. *Sports Illustrated,* bills, *Esquire,* circulars and . . . Jesus!

The typeface on the envelope made him start. He felt his face palpitate. Je-sus. He raced up the stairs, taking them two at a time, spinning the key into the lock as quickly as he could.

Script typeface. The letter from, no question, the same bleached ribbon that had been used to. . . .

He threw down the mail on the couch, except for the mysterious letter, which he tore open. Inside was what he feared and expected. An index card.

An index card on which had been typed:

the lovely in life is the familiar

& only the lovelier for continuing
strange.

He didn't know what it was from. It had an ominous tone, though, that wasn't likely to cheer a soul. Krim realized what it meant. As sure as Beryl James and Hope Carey were dead and gone, the crazy loon had put the ball in his court. *Catch me if you can.* He phoned the 20th precinct.

Lynch was in. Krim told him what had turned up in the morning's mail.

"Be grateful for small things," said Lynch. "There's no corpse yet."

"Might be he's giving us time to figure the clue."

"Maybe. I'm betting twenty-four hours we'll have a body."

"Let's figure we got a shot at least."

"Okay. Let's suppose we do."

"The poem," said Krim. "Gotta find out which one it is. And what the rest of it says."

"That's your turf, friend."

"I'll take my shot at it. But I need a hand."

"Who? Me? You gotta be kidding. I don't know a . . . a . . . a. . . ."

"A trochee from a turkey."

"Correct."

"But you'd know how to get some of your men over to the university so the English department can look the words over."

"All right. I'm with you."

the lovely in life is the familiar
& only the lovelier for continuing
strange.

He studied the words but nothing clicked.

It could, he supposed, be an ironic comment on what had occurred lately. Murder had given the familiar days a strange and (by the strangler's logic) lovely continuity. But what of it? Where was the hint?

Who in hell knew? He read the words over and over again, trying to discover some quirky inversion of meaning, a pursuit he finally gave up as futile. He'd be damned if there was any easy answer in those words.

The phone rang. He stared at it and had the spooked feeling it was the strangler calling. To say what? He didn't dare think about it. He let it ring again, then picked up.

The voice was familiar. He couldn't place the name at first. Stuart Brandt? Stuart Brandt? Brandt's voice had the suppressed edge of excitement to it that

made him wary.

"From grad school, man," said Brandt. "Remember? *Modern Tragedy and Black Comedy. Studies in the Poetry of Hart Crane and Robert Lowell. The English Language in Its Sociocultural Setting.*"

"Stuie. Yes. Of course. How goes it?"

"Not bad, Harry. Not bad at all. I'm working for the *Post.*"

"The *Saturday Evening*. . . ?"

"Heh heh. Same Harry. Was referring to Dotty Schiff's rag."

"Got it. The *New York Post.*"

"Right. Long time, Harry. You beat the draft?"

"Mmm. After grad school, found a doctor to write a credible medical history. You?"

"Did a John Barrymore."

"No kidding."

"The whole number, man. Stinking. Disoriented. Dilated eyeball. Even had artificial shit stains in my BVDs. Kraft french dressing and——"

"Stuie, I hate to cut you short. But I'm involved in——"

"I know, I know."

"You know? What are you talking about?"

"About Audrey Morse."

"What about her?"

"I was there when you called."

"I don't get it," Krim said, his heart sinking.

"Not you exactly. Your secretary."

He exhaled. "Oh yes. I see. I see."

"Ran into Audrey at a bar in the Village. Had a couple Bloody Mary's with her and——"

"Spare me the prurient details."

"What do you take me for, Harry? A scandal monger?"

"No comment. Anyway, you called to——"

"Get the story."

"I'm gonna ask you a favor, Stuie. Hold off twenty-four hours. I'll give you all I know, including copies of pertinent documents tomorrow."

"Why put it on hold?"

"I think we've got a shot at cracking this thing open. I don't wanna risk——"

"I think that's bullshit."

"Of course you do. You're supposed to. Comes with the job. You'll go

along, though?"

"Till tomorrow. That's it, though."

"Bless ya, mon. Bless ya. One other thing."

"What's that?" Brandt asked.

"In your magic moments with Audrey Morse, does she still swoon, 'I want your baby. I want your baby'?"

A moment's pause. "Tomorrow, man."

Harry Krim threw his head back and laughed noiselessly.

"See ya, Stuie."

In his dream, the sands of the beach were blinding white and a giant squid-like creature squirted blood. When the phone rang, it was early afternoon. He'd dozed a few hours.

It was Carillo on the line. "G-g-guy at Hunter College got it."

"I'm ears, man."

"By Walter de la Mare, eighteen-seventy-three to nineteen-fifty-six."

"Cut to the action."

"Here it is. Quote. That shining moon, dash, watched by that one faint star, colon, new line, sure now am I, comma, beyond the fear of change, new line, the lovely in life is the familiar, comma. . . . You've got the rest."

"Yeah, yeah. Let me play with it. Get right back to you. Wait a minute. The title. What's the title?"

"Aw shit. Forgot to ask."

"Okay. Okay. Find out. Probably not important. But get it anyway."

"Right," said Carillo, clicking off.

He looked de la Mare's words over.

> That shining moon—hatched by that one faint star:
> Sure now am I, beyond the fear of change,
> The lovely in life is the familiar,
> And only the lovelier for continuing strange.

On first glance, it added little to what Harry Krim already made of the poem. It seemed only to deepen the forboding feeling it gave him.

He checked it against the list of women who'd not yet been warned. He made no connection, though. And time was slipping by. For all he knew the sonofabitch was with her now.

Carillo phoned back. "*Night,*" he said. "That's the title."

"That's all? Just——"

"*N-night.* Walter de la Mare. *Night.*"

"Off the top, I don't make anything of it."

"Sorry to hear."

"I'll study it, though. Maybe it'll make sense to me."

He hung up. He felt extremely weary. He realized suddenly that he hadn't eaten since morning. He wasn't very hungry, actually. But he knew he ought to put something in his stomach. He cut oranges and used a juicer to fix a tall glass. Then he poured the juice into a blender, added milk, honey, and an egg and beat the mixture. It came out frothy and quelled his hunger, leaving him free to pursue his thoughts.

Night. . . .—was coming. But what more? At that impasse, he lay on the couch and dozed off.

The downstairs buzzer awakened him. It was Lynch and Carillo. When they got to his door, they looked grim.

The call had come in from the superintendent of the victim's building.

Shortly after 5:30 P.M. the superintendent had had his dinner interrupted by a phone call. The caller had told him that a murder had been committed in apartment 4-B. The time of the killing, he said, was 5:35, or a minute past sunset. The strangler had made the superintendent write the hour down and then had hung up.

Lynch related this as he drove up Sixth Avenue in the unmarked sedan. Turning west on Christopher Street, he said, "'Night.' He killed her the official moment that night fell."

Krim nodded, afraid to ask the compelling question. His heart pounded. He tried to make the panic subside.

"So that," he said, his voice sounding distant to him, "that's the connection to Mr. de la Mare's poem."

"It's not the only one," said Carillo.

"What do you mean?"

The unmarked car crossed Seventh Avenue and Bleecker and turned north on Hudson, braking to a stop in front of a Village address.

"Oh no!" Krim slammed his fist on the dashboard. "Goddammit—NO!"

Carillo placed his hand on Harry Krim's shoulder.

"Not Jodie," Krim gasped.

But it was she. And a few minutes later, Harry Krim saw the trim body, blond and naked on the vinyl floor. The puckered mouth with its sweet button of lower lip was agape, her eyes were distorted. The sight of her made him gag. He leaned against the wall. A fine coat of perspiration covered him.

He could not help looking at her, though. There was dried semen on the inner portion of her slightly spread thighs. The fists were clenched and drawn up like a baby's. Her neck was discolored. Her death throe was all the more peculiar for the serenity of her surroundings. Not a piece of furniture was out of place. Not the wicker chair. The wicker daybed. The Thirties style sofa.

He thought back. . . .

. . . to the late Sixties when the Village was wild with scenes and drugs. Somehow or other he'd gotten involved with two parents trying to find their runaway son. Using what street contacts he had, he'd found him and made a few dollars for his troubles.

Nearly broke at the time, Krim had started thinking. He began stopping by laundromats, head shops, precinct houses—places where parents put up notices. He went into the business of finding runaways. He'd phone up the parents with names and numbers of satisfied clients with whom to check his crackerjack reputation. It led in time to a three-year stint with a certified agency, and then to being what he was, a state-accredited private investigator. Back then, though, he thought of it as a fast dollar.

Jodie was one of the ones he had looked for. To meet her parents was to know why she'd left home. Wealthy corporate know-nothing daddy and a booze-stinking money-crazy mums. He charged them top freight to find the daughter. When he did, though, he was enchanted. She was sixteen, quick-witted, and alluring. With a bulge in his jeans, he'd unbuttoned her blouse to get at her bra-less scented ripeness. It was a start of a lovely night. The next morning, though, she was on her way home.

Back in the city two years later, she moved in with Krim for awhile. They'd stayed good friends after. Now, as he thought of her, his face quavered. He felt nauseous again and sat on the wicker chair while Lynch and Carillo began to pencil entries into their pads, beginning with the victim's identity.

Knight, Jodie D.

The equation of death. *Night* = (K)night @ night.

III

It was a long tortured sleep. He woke with aches and knotted muscles, sat a long time at the edge of the bed, bent forward thinking, feeling his heartbruised loss. After awhile he left the apartment, figuring the walk would do him good.

The morning was crisp, cold, more like February. He drew up the collar of his fatigue jacket and headed north on Sixth Avenue. Around him was the sound of traffic barreling up from the southerly tip of the island. By the corner

playground on Houston Street, older folks sat on municipal park benches, a lone figure dribbled a basketball up and down the macadam court. The workaday crowd waited along the Avenue, hailing taxicabs. Underfoot, through the grates of the pavement, came the rumble of subway trains. The city, flexed and in gear, helped Harry Krim meet the day.

He bought the papers near Eighth Street. The *Times* had several paragraphs buried in the second section. The *News* was not so reserved. *LADY-KILLER STRIKES AGAIN. Third Victim Slain in Village.* With pictures. Neither story mentioned Harry Krim. The *News,* though, alluded to oblique written references the killer had left behind. It was only a matter of time before the papers linked Krim to the proceedings. Stuart Brandt already had enough pieces to stitch together the story.

Would it, he wondered, complicate the matter? Would it encourage the killer? Harry Krim feared it might. Up to now, the strangler had been a shadowy figure in the public prints. Once his *modus operandi,* so to speak, became public knowledge, he'd be more than just another pathological loony, he'd be a strikingly evil character. And all indications were that he was prepared to live up to his reputation.

From what Krim had seen the night before, he sensed the strangler was more at ease with violent notions. For graphic proof there was Jodie Knight. Where Beryl and Hope had, it appeared, been set upon from behind, Jodie had not. The strangler had reached the point, apparently, where he did not mind looking his victim in the face, progress of the scariest sort.

Krim was chagrined. The night before, the image of Jodie had made him sick. Now it was part of a bloody jigsaw he examined with professional care. Man is a curiously adaptable species.

He shook his head and started back to his place, trying to get a line on what he was up against. The death of Jodie Knight had changed Harry Krim's mind on one point. He no longer believed the murderer was a one-shot figure in the lives of the women he chose to victimize. The very modern style of Beryl and Hope had persuaded Krim that the killer—a man of some charm and erudition—had caught their fancy and installed himself overnight as lover and, alas, executor. Krim had not thought of him as a recurring item in their lives.

An error on his part, he now believed. For Jodie Knight had been warned. She knew to be on guard. Back from her apartment, Krim had gone over the list of names. Next to Jodie's, in Ruth Parks' script, was this: *JK at home. Gave her warning. She said hi to HK, pls call when you can.*

Pls call when you can. Jesus Christ.

Night = (K)night @ night. It was a bad joke. He wished he had caught onto it sooner. Would that have done the trick? Sent his mind spinning in the right direction? Or would he have resisted (K)night because he considered her out of harm's way?

It made him think of another point: what if the postal service had failed its delivery? The clue had come on the same day the murder of Jodie Knight was committed. That was cutting it close. Delayed a day—and Harry Krim would not have had a shot at it. Had the strangler considered the possibility?

No doubt he had.

And decided, so what? It was the luck of the draw. The joke was still on Krim. It was just a slightly different joke.

The downstairs buzzer sounded. Over the intercom, he asked who it was. Stuart Brandt, it turned out—come to fetch his scoop. As Brandt started up the stairs, Krim saw no way to back down on his promise or any reason to. The story was public knowledge already—with only the part about Krim missing. And Brandt had enough of it to go with what he had if Krim refused to elaborate. It made no sense to be coy.

Stuart Brandt was a big fierce-looking man. With a dark, bushy beard and hair parted down the middle, he looked like a character out of the Old West.

"Fuzzied up your act some, Stuie."

"Been a long time, Harry."

"As one draft dodger to another, what are the ground rules here?"

"Everything's on the record. You don't wanna talk about something, say so. Otherwise——"

"Fair enough. You got everything you want?"

"Heh heh. Haven't lost your——"

"Inspired wit?"

"Something like that."

Krim told the gruesome tale in a flat uninflected voice. Brandt took it down on folded copy paper. His questions involved the motives behind the crimes. Krim avoided that speculation. He'd been so wrong so often he knew there was no percentage in guessing. He stuck to the facts.

As for the rest, Brandt could infer what he wanted. Harry Krim had his theories but not for public record. And not, at least, until he had the killer in his sights. If he ever did.

It was one thing, though, to tell the story and quite another, as far as he was concerned, to talk of his feeling for the victims. He cut Brandt there.

"Hearst lives, Stuie."

"That tactless?"
"You saved it for last, no?"
Stuart Brandt smiled.
"If only," said Krim, "our highbrow assassin were as obvious."
"In a way he was."
"Salt on wounds."
"You ought to be used to it," Brandt said, with a sly smile.
"I am," said Krim. "But only in iambic pentameters."
"Well, if a man's to be barbed, it's the only way to go."
"I'll get the fucker," muttered Harry Krim. "I'll get him."

He got him, in a way of speaking, in the morning mail.

The script typeface on the envelope, product of a faded ribbon, startled him no less than it did the day before. He had not expected it so soon. The murderous loon was going about this like Sherman did Georgia, full-speed ahead.

There was, of course, the index card inside, with words typed on it:

the feathered glory from her
loosening thighs,

whose source he knew straightaway. But though he recognized the verse as being from the hand of William Butler Yeats, his exhilaration was tempered by his suspicion that he'd figured it too easily. There was a trap here. What it was, he didn't know.

He phoned Lynch and Carillo to tell them the latest. They said they'd be by his place soon, stay put. He intended to. There was work to do.

In a paperback of selected poems by Yeats, he found the one called *Leda and the Swan*. He read:

A sudden blow: the great wings beating still
Above the staggering girl, her thighs caressed
By the dark webs, her nape caught in his bill,
He holds her helpless breast upon his breast.

How can those terrified vague fingers push
The feathered glory from her loosening thighs?
And how can body, laid in that white rush,
But feel the strange heart beating where it lies?

It went on. Powerful evocative verse that signified something to Yeats and to his critics. But to the strangler, what? That was the question.

Harry Krim knew there was a reason, some diabolical reason, the verse was so easy to identify. It might be the perverse pleasure the killer took in knowing the cops were trying to connect myth to murder. Krim could see how this particular individual would savor the paradox. Several times Lynch and Carillo had wondered was there a figure in his academic past who'd fit the crime. There were none Harry Krim could think of.

He looked at the envelope the Yeatsian reference had arrived in. It was postmarked the day previous, which meant that even as the killer focused his thoughts on Jodie Knight, he was laying the groundwork for murder number four. An overachiever.

A strange experience to root around in Yeats' textured verse. It stirred up the fullblooded feeling he'd once had for the written word.

And though he finecombed every line of *Leda,* he found himself paging through the rest of the book as well, imagining the tortured sweet hours Yeats had spent at his work and the changes he'd made from sometimes effete post-Romantic (heir to the pre-Raphaelites) to British symbolist and on to, quite simply, bold unique Y-e-a-t-s.

Back to *Leda*. . . . He worked at it until his mind balked at the effort. He knocked off for lunch—a blueberry yogurt and iced tea—and went out again to clear his head.

At a newspaper kiosk he saw his picture on the front page of the *Post*. *LADYKILLER & SLEUTH MATCH WITS*. It was no surprise. Yet it hit him like a shot to the gut.

He knew how the word from a tabloid was spread by the wire services to subscribing radio and television stations so that by Cronkite time Harry Krim would be known far beyond metropolitan New York. And known as what?

As the man who'd been outwitted by a stylish strangler.

It was no boon to confidence.

The phone was ringing when he turned the key in the door to his flat. He hurried to it.

In a studio apartment just off Sheridan Square, Lynch said, the body of Maggie Haynes had been found. She was nude. She'd been strangled. The killer had phoned the building's superintendent to advise him of Haynes' dispirited condition.

IV

The dead woman was found sprawled across an Italian sleep sofa, her painted

toes touching the floor. Indications were she'd had sexual intercourse with her assailant.

There the grim similarities to the other murders ended. Maggie Haynes was a tall buxom brunette with a body that kept her in the part-time jobs a struggling actress must take. Few gentlemen proprietors of city restaurants and drinking bars could say no to hard-sell Maggie in her low-cut summer dresses.

The body served her at the end as well. She was a powerful woman. To power was wedded the acute paranoia that many actresses acquire. Ms. Haynes had not expired without a struggle.

The signs were in the chaotic state of the apartment. The room had once been a servant's during the days when the building was a residential hotel. It would take a menial to shape up the place after the murder, preferably one with a strong stomach. There was blood all over. Much of it, it appeared, was not hers. She'd suffered scratches and abrasions. But the blood that had spilled onto the floor and smudged the walls was his. With an oak candlestick approximately twelve inches high, she'd struck him a blow. The candlestick was on the floor, next to the fluffy white rug on which semen stains were discovered.

Harry Krim's speculation was this:

Maggie Haynes had not been fooled when her visitor alluded to the previous murders. The pages of the *New York Post,* scattered about the apartment, suggested the subject arose. What alerted her to danger, Krim guessed, was the feverish note of his voice. Flushed with excitement from the front-page story, his voice betrayed the casual interest his words intended. As an actress, she would have been sensitive to that.

Had she then reached from where she lay for the blunt instrument and brought it across his skull or face? Something like that had occurred. Perhaps he'd even gotten as far as the Yeats poem, the meaning of which she'd grasped more quickly than he counted on.

Whatever the truth, all there was now was the too familiar still life that followed: Maggie's body in raggedy-Ann repose. Her beauty had been a glossy sort that attracted old men and big spenders. In death, though, the desperate frenzy that buoyed her looks was gone. Frailty became her.

Harry Krim had known her. And what he'd known he'd not admired. Through Kay Darcey, an actress he'd gone with, he met Maggie and found her a shrewd calculating wench. She was never particularly subtle in how she manipulated men. But with 38-Cs, it turned out she didn't have to be.

Krim was no exception. Maggie worked him as easily as she did the others. In his case, it didn't require him to put up top dollar for theater and

dinners, but merely to go along with the *ménage à trois* Maggie wanted. The thought of those ample tits to fondle inspired enough eloquence on his part to get dear Kay to go along. That she didn't really want to he ignored for the sake of sweet skin time. He understood her hesitance only after a few savory nights. Kay was, it seemed, the real object of Maggie's affection.

That was awhile back, though. He hadn't seen Kay in some time. Whatever there had been between them had ended on the fluffy white scatter rug. He didn't blame her. It'd made him think twice about Harry Krim. As for Maggie, she was too far gone to change. *Y'isgadaal, v'yishkadash,* sweetheart.

The clock on the turret of the Jefferson Market Library said 8:45. He kept the tweed hat he'd begun to wear pulled low to avoid recognition.

His stomach growled. His smell offended him—funky dread enzymes feeding his foul sweat. Deathwatch did that. Frustration added to it. His nerves were frazzled. He was angry. There was tension at the back of his neck. He couldn't afford a headache. He had too much to do. He walked at a brisk pace, in a hurry to get home.

At a kiosk he saw the headlines on the "Night Owl" edition of the *Daily News. LADYKILLER SLAYS 4th. Victim Was An Actress.* With pictures. Maggie Haynes, in a low-cut spring dress, never looked better. The shot of Krim was AP Wirephoto. A head and shoulders. He was fast becoming a household word. Like Wrong Way Corrigan. Or Spiro Agnew. A frigging punch line.

Somewhere in the city the maniac plotted. Of that—and only that—was Harry Krim sure.

Krim needed a break. Even bloodied, the strangler had been mindful of his charade and had not waited long to get Maggie's demise on record. He was not, it appeared, discouraged by the close call. For all Harry Krim knew, it might have exhilarated him.

The man was driven, he sensed. Krim thought of authors he'd heard in Village bars who spoke of the taut fury that inhabits an individual who presses to the end of a book. It was like that with the private eye as well. The need to close a case consumed a man, twisting time, mind, and nerve ends out of shape. It was the realm of compulsion. And it was, he knew, where the killer was coming from.

Back at his place, stripped to BVDs, Krim swigged a mug of iced tea. It hit the spot. He thought of Annie. It seemed so long ago that he'd left her at LaGuardia. In fact, it was not quite forty-eight hours.

He showered, letting the spray needle against the fibers of his neck, working the tension out. He soaped the grime from his body, and lathered shampoo into his scalp. It was just the thing.

He toweled dry and, in a lounge chair, took what messages there were on his answering machine. Annie had called. So had the news media. Ruth Parks had checked in.

Hungry, he cut broccoli and onions and chicken, added peapods and heated it all in a wok with safflower oil. In a separate pan he cooked leftover rice. He combined them, and seasoned with sesame salt and teriyaki sauce.

As he ate, a thought occurred: Maggie Haynes was not on the list of names he'd drawn up. The other victims were. It had to mean something.

But what? At first, he couldn't figure it. He stared at the list and drew a blank. He left his dinner and paced the room, trying to pin down the answer.

When he did, it sent a chill through him. For at last he began to fathom just how the scabrous plot had come to be.

On a night more than a year past, Harry Krim had gone to a party. The date was 12/31/74.

The New Year's Eve party took place in a six-room apartment on Riverside Drive. Krim went alone. Kay Darcey was not speaking to him. Others were busy.

For several hours that night he had the ear of a lithe black girl who grew more tender by the drink and, toward midnight, matched him sweet nuthin' for nuthin'. It was as good as she got. Shortly after Guy Lombardo tooted in *Anno Domini* nineteen hundred and seventy-five, she was out cold, Jim-Beamed beyond her limit.

He left without her and, it turned out, his address book too, a loss that struck him odd at the time. He'd had the item buttoned up in his fatigue jacket. Its disappearance seemed no accident, yet it was hardly cause to call out the gendarmes. He phoned Levine, who'd given the party, to see if it had turned up the next morning. It hadn't. He didn't think of it after.

Now, though, he saw that it fit the spooked jigsaw. Whoever had laid hands to it probably knew who Harry Krim was and no doubt appreciated the irony of his petty thievery. The pity was that irony did not suffice. The man was, it turned out, a megalomaniac who saw the chance to parlay his find into front-page shazzam.

That he'd managed it with no slip-up so far attested to his foresight. He'd thought the thing out. No detail, it seemed, was too trivial for his attention.

Usually the simple detail screwed the otherwise carefully designed plan. Not in this case. Exactitude and patience marked this plot. A deranged genius was back of it.

It was a plan with a kind of evil beauty . . . like a spider's web. To Krim, at least, the intricacy was intriguing in that way. He suspected that if the full scope of the plot was ever known it would have the symmetry and rich echoes of the poetry the madman employed.

Madman/deranged genius. That and more. For first and foremost, he was a charmer. He had to be to have had access to the women he did. They were a cut above most, though they shared a trait Krim hadn't thought of before—an amenability for men who were rovers. It was important. It meant his nemesis could be close to them on his terms.

There was an aspect to it, though, that encouraged Krim. The killer had probably tried out other names from the stolen directory and may have failed with a few of those women. Some of them might be able to recall him. By cross-reference, an astute interviewer might begin to construct a picture of him. Others with whom he'd had sex could add to it, though Krim wondered if many of them were still drawing breath.

He ruled himself out as the party to talk to the women. A female officer was what the situation called for. It fell to him to summon up the names (and phone listings), many for women whose names he no longer kept. It meant sorting through his past, a past that had begun to grate on him.

Still, it was a chance to uncover facts previously unavailable. It was a lead—not the only one either. There was the party as well and the chance (slim though it was) that Levine or his invited guests might recall a name, or a face, from that night to fit the cunning figure who'd gone into Krim's pocket.

He worked a long hard night on the phones. By morning, he'd made progress. In hand was a growing list of names from the party of 12/31/74. Levine himself had taxied downtown to help. Lynch had several policewomen checking out the names Krim recalled from the stolen directory and he'd instructed the officers to doublecheck the original list as well to see if any of those women might have had contact with their man.

It was not all Lynch did. He had found the link to the Yeats poem. The victim was, he learned, "Maggie Haynes" on her Equity and AFTRA cards only because her real name conflicted with that of an actress already in those guilds. The other woman went by Leda Haynes.

"Had no idea," said Krim.

"He was banking on that, Commander."

"Not very sporting."

"Haven't met too many homicidal types who are."

"It's the illusion of risk then."

"No highbrow theories this early."

"I'm beginning to intensely dislike this individual."

The feeling grew with the morning's mail. In it came another envelope with the script typeface. An index card was inside. On it,

she found another

Those words—nothing more.

No longer did it provoke the quickened pulse it did before. The urgency was gone. In its place was a resignation to his ineptness at the queer deductive game.

He did not ignore the clue, however. By some quirk, he might know its meaning. Looking it over, though, he saw he didn't.

He wasn't alarmed. No sense to that. The typewritten clue was no longer his only resort. Other researches had begun, meant to flush the bastard out. It was only a matter of time before a detail would fix his identity.

As for the clue, he noted its brevity. It hadn't the lyrical flow of the others. Or their lilt and resonance. On the face of it, it hardly seemed poetry.

He had to assume it was, though. Doggerel or mere distraction, he meant to treat it as just another item in the case, in spite of the grim consequences it signaled. To focus on

she found another

to the exclusion of other leads was no wisdom, given his previous lack of success in that area.

There were other facts to consider. The lab report, he learned, indicated that the blood on the candlestick contained follicles of hair. Analysis revealed they were from the head of a dark-haired male caucasian.

Hardly an apocalyptic item. But it cheered Harry Krim. It was a concrete fact. A contact through time and space had been made. A scalp wound, though, could be covered over by hair and would not necessarily discourage another try at homicide. Moreover, a police alert had not turned up any emergency room cases involving a wound caused by a blunt instrument in the past twenty-four hours.

It left Krim to work at what he had. He spent the afternoon adding to the list of New Year's Eve celebrants. What he hoped was that Lynch's lady's auxiliary would come up with a name that was on his list. By late afternoon, there was no such match.

He eyed the index card.

she found another

It brought no spark of recognition, but the phrase gave him a strange feeling he couldn't quite explain. Things remained fuzzy. No longer was he sure that the man who'd hit on him as a means to elaborate murder had done so by chance. The stolen address book suggested other possibilities.

The party of 12/31/74 had been a free-floating one—people coming and going, many of them strangers in the company of invited guests. Krim's memory, though, was of a homogeneous group. No blue collars or Quantico marines. Mostly people BA'd and self-made.

From that memory—a disturbing thought. Was it possible the murderer, a man he'd known in his past, had looked him in the eye that night and gone unrecognized? Identity changes were frequent these days. The example of Stuart Brandt sufficed: squeaky-clean in grad school, hirsute now. Krim would never have recognized him in the streets.

Suppose it was the case. It meant the man had watched Krim enter the apartment and some time after gone to the fatigue jacket. Out of curiosity? A whim? The allure of the private eye? Whatever the answer, one question remained. Who was this man?

Krim walked to the window fronting Sixth Avenue and watched the traffic surge past. His eye caught a figure on the street, a tall woman with an elegant walk. She wore a polo coat and had a luxurious mane of hair. A scarf fluttered about her collar. She crossed the street, walking towards his building, and then on by. A pity.

He was up against it again, looking for an excuse to hit the streets. He decided to do without one. On the way out, though, he was still thinking of the verses that had figured in the case, working backwards from *Leda*.

He was almost to the street when a thought occurred to him. He stopped, a stricken look on his face. Then he turned and plodded back up the stairs.

He plumped himself in a lounge chair with books of verse in his lap.

The phone rang. He ignored it, not wanting to break his train of thought. Names: Hope is the thing with feathers. Night is (K)night. Leda is Leda (via Maggie).

Each poem, in a way, more explicit than the one preceding it. There was a sense of progressive risk. Okay. Maybe that's so. What of it? he asked himself.

The phone stopped ringing.

Harry Krim figured it like this:

The plot was meant to be, quite simply, a criminal masterpiece, a bloody gem, whose worth was the meticulous way it was put together and the levels of meaning the way yielded.

If that was the case, he'd not even scratched the surface. He'd concentrated only on the mysteries of the would-be victim, ignoring altogether the source of the violence and the reason why.

The reason why, he suspected, was tied to the final foul act. How far he was from that merciful finish he had no idea. He sensed only that the number was fixed, befitting an ordered scheme.

As for who the perpetrator was—that was another story. He believed there were intimations on the subject that had gone unheeded. Now, in his lounge chair, he tried to figure what they were, working backwards from

she found another.

That was his starting point, and no point at all. Yeats' poem offered more to work with. A god-figure in other guise. Zeus as a swooping bird. An image that would appeal to the everyday megalomaniac, combining the thunder of the Almighty with the grace and deceit of the swan.

Say it applied. Say there was a connection. Could he make something of it? He tried, looking at the image and imagining how his nemesis might use it. Zeus as a swooping bird. Back to names again. Most clues had turned on names. Zeus: not your garden variety tag. The closest variation was Seuss, a name of no special import to Krim.

Swan. In Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past,* there was a Charles Swann. Swann, who is part Jewish, has an affair with Odette de Crecy, whom he later marries. Krim saw no connection.

A cul de sac, apparently. Or was there more to it? Had he overlooked a twist here? Always there was a twist with this fellow. Zeus / god / yaweh / deity. Not a likely source. Swan / bird / fowl. Possibilities there. The names of specific birds. Even fowl(er). So on and so forth. It was worth a——

He shot out of his seat and paced the floor, telling himself he was on to something. The male swan is, of course, the drake. And Bill is short for William.

Above the staggering girl, her thighs caressed
By the dark webs, her nape caught in his bill. . . .

William Drake. William Drake.

Regrettably the name meant nothing to Harry Krim.

He felt terribly let down. Where, he wondered, had he gone wrong? Was this case truly beyond him? He refused to concede that it was. He began tracing

back, step by step, to find the flaw in his thinking. It started with his analyzing Yeats' lines, drawing inexorably, he thought, towards the answer, the words that——

The words. Wait! Krim felt his pulse race. Maybe. Might be. Just the kind of mistake a city soul would make. Barnyard terminology. Had he confused——

Harry Krim rifled through the pages of the dictionary, suspecting a drake was a bird of another feather. Like a duck.

> Swan (swon). n. 1. any of several large, stately, aquatic birds of the subfamily Anserinae, of the family Anatidae, having a long, slender neck and usually pure-white plumage in the adult. The *cob* is the male. The *pen* is the female.

Jesus, he thought, William Cobb!

William Cobb had once taught Harry Krim *Form and Symbol in Modern Poetry*.

William Cobb was a perfect fit.

Not only did he match the clues, he was also working out of his métier. A fair hand at writing poetry, he taught it in more than the narrow academic way. To his listeners, he'd transmitted the pleasure of his subject, letting them admire (and enjoy) the verse and not be transfixed by scholarly razzle-dazzle. In that sense, he was different from his more pedagogic colleagues.

That was a decade ago, though. The time between had been a tumultuous period, and most people Krim knew had been affected in significant ways. What he'd heard of Cobb over the years he'd gotten in bits and pieces. Divorce / LSD use / bad scenes / loss of tenure. Fragments of a man in decline. Not that he'd paid much mind to these reports. Cobb was long gone from his thoughts.

He was back now, though, his name and Upper West Side address jotted onto a scrap of paper. It was difficult, though, for Harry Krim to reconcile his memory of the personable academic with the image of a cunning murderer. Had he lined up the English faculty from '65–'66, he'd have picked William Cobb, B.A., M.A., Ph.D., as least likely to go off the deep end. Cobb seemed a well-adjusted individual, not prone to the backbiting and petty egomania Krim had seen in his colleagues.

William Cobb. He was the one. All the pieces of the bloody puzzle fell in place now, particularly the reasons why. And Cobb's promiscuous woman had to be a piece in that puzzle.

He walked towards the IRT Seventh Avenue line in Sheridan Square, changed his mind and flagged cabs heading uptown on Hudson. He let a few taxis go by, and finally hailed a Checkered.

He gave the driver an address and sat back. He considered calling Lynch and Carillo but decided not to. He'd finish this the way it was meant to be. *Mano a mano.*

He'd been to Cobb's place before. Cobb had thrown a party once on some obscure literary pretext—the birth of a poet, the publication of a celebrated verse, something of the sort. Krim had met the woman that night.

The taxi driver left him a block away from Cobb's building. Krim walked the street, keeping an eye on those he passed on the remote chance he'd recognize Cobb. He stayed on the opposite side of the street a few minutes and then crossed.

He stuck the hat in his pocket. The names of the building's residents were in slots next to corresponding buzzers. The superintendent was a man named Figueroa. Krim wondered if the ladykiller was celebrated in *El Diario,* too. If not, it might be difficult talking his way in.

He tried the entry door, but it was locked. He buzzed Figueroa. No answer. He tried the other apartment on the first floor. No answer there either. He wrapped his snub-nosed weapon in his hat and punched a pane of glass in on the entry door to let himself in.

He moved quickly up the stairwell. Cobb was in the third-floor apartment fronting the street. Krim stood by the doorway, hearing a radio—a classical music station. He knocked.

"Yeesss?"

He knocked again.

"Who is it?"

"Walter de la Mare."

No response.

"I said Walter de la Mare."

"Yes. I heard."

"Does it ring a bell?"

"It's a little late for parlor games. Don't you think?"

"Better late than never."

"What do you want?"

"Poetic justice, fucker."

"That's very good," Cobb said, and Krim could imagine a smile on the other side of the door.

"A B-plus, Doctor?"

"At least, Mr. Krim. To tell you the truth, I didn't expect you so soon. The place is messy. Otherwise, I'd invite you in. Perhaps some other night."

"I was counting on finishing this thing tonight."

"Well, I really don't see how. I'm working on a piece on Hopkins. Gerard Manley Hopkins. You remember him, Mr. Krim?"

"Sprung rhythm. *The Windhover, Pied Beauty. The Caged Skylark.* How am I doing, sir?"

"Not bad for a private eye. You're *sui generis.*"

"Open up, Cobb."

Krim was surprised to hear the locks tumble and the door open the few inches its latch chain allowed. He flattened against the wall on the chance he'd be looking down the barrel of a gun.

"Nothing to fear, Krim," said Cobb. "I'm terrified of . . . how do you people refer to it . . . heat? Pieces?"

Through the sliver of space, Krim made out Cobb. Though the voice was familiar, the face was not. William Cobb had aged badly. He was jowly and looked misused—his eyes had darkened flesh beneath them and a peculiar wary glint, his mouth sagged, the lines curling downward. He looked like a cross between a derelict and late-period Montgomery Clift. It was a feverish prodigal quality that, combined with his considerable charm, no doubt had a certain appeal to women. To Krim, though, it came as a jolt.

"Hardly recognize *Herr Docktor* Cobb, do you, Krim?"

"Well, uh, you've——"

"Been through changes. That's the expression you people use, isn't it?"

"It's hard all over," said Krim, refusing to sympathize.

"I could care about 'all over.' "

"I've noticed."

"You've noticed. Heh," he said coldly.

The mood had changed. Krim slid his hand up to the pocket the gun was in. He sensed whatever move Cobb had in mind would not be long in coming. Maybe, though, he could talk Cobb into giving up. Save both of them any bother. He wasn't banking on it, though.

"I didn't think," said Cobb, "you'd figure it out until too late."

"What do you mean—*too late*?"

"Until I was finished, of course."

"Well, I doped it out."

"Indeed, you did."

"Look on the bright side, Cobb."

"What's that?"

"Maybe there's a poem in it. There'll be plenty of time to work it out."

"No poems for me, Krim. Haven't been in years."

"I see."

"You know, don't you, who the final woman would have been in this——"

"I've a pretty good idea."

"Yes," said Cobb.

It was the last thing he said. In the next instant, Krim saw Cobb's hand come forward with a gun. Harry Krim dove as the shot went off.

V

The room was an oval shape accented by a curving banquette. The coffee table of white painted flagstone had jagged edges that were a counterpoint to the room's fluid curves.

The blood on the floor was William Cobb's. Pieces of his bullet-shattered skull were found top of a plastic box sculpture and in the eight-hundred-pound specimen cactus near the door. The gun was still in Cobb's hand. A single shot did the job.

On an eighteenth-century African throne was a nine-by-twelve envelope. Inside was a tear sheet from a magazine, a syllabus at the head of which was printed—*Form & Symbol in Mod. Poetry Engl. Language Studies 801 Dr. Cobb '65–'66*—and an index card.

On the index card had been typed:

O sure) but nobody unders (no, but
Rully yes I know) but what it comes

"Mean anything to you?" Lynch asked.

Harry Krim nodded that it did.

Dr. William Cobb's course, *Form & Symbol in Modern Poetry,* had covered the works of several poets. Dickinson, de la Mare, Stevens, Yeats were among them.

The other one was E.E. Cummings. Without a syllabus, Krim would have known him anyway. There was no mistaking Mr. Cummings' touch.

o
sure)but
nobody unders(no

but Rully yes i
know)but what it comes

to(listen you don't have to

i mean Reely)but(no listen don't
be sil why sure)i mean the(o
well ughhuh sure why not yuh course yeh well
naturally i und certain i o posi but

i know sure that's)but listen here's

(correct you said it yeah)but
listen but(it's Rilly yeh
ughhuh yuh)i know

(o sure i

know yes
of

course)but what I mean is Nobody Understands Her RERLY

That left she found others,

the clue he'd abandoned for the line of thought that led Krim to the door of Cobb. The tear sheet explained it.

It was from an obscure literary quarterly, the sort that pays its authors not in cash dollars but in copies of the magazine.

The page was covered with a poem.

Once,
quick to come
&
slow to feel,
William has changed.
His peck-her
is
admirably 'n endlessly taut,
his heart notably nicer.

Copyright 1935 by E. E. Cummings; copyright 1963 by Marion Morehouse Cummings. Reprinted by permission of Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc. from *Complete Poems 1913-1963* by E. E. Cummings.

It's just the timing that's bad.
For while William was working
at his hard-and-soul,
she found others.

Piecing it together, Harry Krim felt none of the elation he'd expected.

Cobb's murderous plot reflected his bitterness, hurt, and disappointment, put in a way that had the unlikely qualities of irony and perspective.

Take Cumming's verse—a barbed treatment of a pretentiously complex woman. Cobb had used it to give the identity and nature of the woman who would have been his final victim, his crowning moment.

Rully/ Reely/ Rilly/ RERLY—a recurring note that for Cobb's purposes tied the lady's affectation to her name, a name that was twisted and pinched and muted throughout the poem, evoking the difficulty that William Cobb had in uttering it.

Harry Krim had no such trouble. Her name was Reilly. Reilly Tate. At one time, she'd been Reilly Tate Cobb. The good doctor's missus. They were a striking couple. William was young and tweedy and had the upright square-jawed good looks of JFK. Reilly was tall and sleek, the kind of shiny well-bred beauty that was particularly esteemed back then, never mind that she talked through her teeth in the cunty style Mr. Cummings depicted and that she didn't give a goddamn about anything or anyone but Rully / Reely /Rilly / RERLY / Reilly.

At one time, it was thought Cobb might turn out to be a poet. Not a major one. Just a competent rough-edged voice. That was his style. It never came to much, though. And for that, apparently, he blamed Reilly.

He simplified, of course, taking the onus off Cobb, reneging on the hard duty an artist must pull if the work is to amount to anything. Not to say that Reilly didn't give him a hosing. She found others, okay. Harry Krim, graduate student, could testify to that. And like so many thoroughly rotten women he was to know, Reilly had been a marvelous piece.

No peace for Cobb, though. In a decade in which people and places came undone, William Cobb was in the mainstream. At the end, he was jowly and sinking, just another of God's spooked souls. If he'd mustered enough for a lively send-off—given Krim the course, so to speak (a course laced with irony, wit, causality)—it was a piss-poor retreat on his small promise. Say this, though. William Cobb's final conceit may have been as affecting as any he'd put to verse. In the end, what Harry Krim felt was pity, horror, and revulsion, and not just for the dead man.

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THE CRIME LAB by George O'Toole. The former head of the Problem Analysis Branch of the CIA discusses how an electronic snooper device may have played a role in the downfall of former Vice President Spiro Agnew.

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THE CRIME LAB

THE CRIME LAB: HYPNOSIS AND CRIME DETECTION

by George O'Toole

The policemen could see that Rabbi Katz was nearly dead; the old man had been struck by a car as he tried to cross a highway in Lakewood, New Jersey. But there was still a chance to save him, and the officers did what they could to administer emergency first aid while waiting for the ambulance. The task of keeping the rabbi alive demanded their full attention, and they could spare little notice for the man who stepped forward from the crowd and confessed that he was the driver of the car that struck the old man. They told him to bring them his driver's license and registration, then turned back to their life-saving efforts. Instead, the man got into his car and sped away.

Patrolman Robert Maras got a fleeting look at the car as it drove off, and later he tried to recall what it looked like. He knew he'd seen the license number, but try as he would, he couldn't remember it. Rabbi Katz died a few hours after the accident, and, when no leads turned up in the case after several days, the police decided to try a last resort: hypnosis.

Patrolman Maras was hypnotized by a local doctor. In the trance state produced by the physician, the officer was able to return in his mind to the time and place of the accident. Again he "saw" the fleeing automobile, and he was able to make out four of the six licence plate digits. Armed with that, plus a description of the auto, the police were able to identify and arrest the suspect.

The case, which occurred in 1974, is not at all unusual. Hypnosis is a unique method of detection that transcends space and time and enables the witness to return to both the scene and the instant of the crime.

Police departments often use hypnosis to help witnesses remember important details of a crime. Last year hypnotism played a role in the search for the missing Teamster boss, Jimmy Hoffa.

Hoffa was last seen on his way to a luncheon meeting with Anthony Giacalone, an alleged Mafia figure. En route to the meeting at a restaurant in a suburb of Detroit, he stopped at the office of a friend, Louis Linteau. Linteau wasn't there, but Hoffa spoke with Elmer Reeves, one of Linteau's employees. He mentioned his luncheon date with Giacalone, and named two other men who were due to attend the meeting.

After Hoffa's disappearance, Reeves tried to recall the conversation for the police, but he was unable to remember the two names Hoffa had mentioned. But under hypnosis Reeves was able to come up with the names. One of them

was Anthony Provenzano, a former Teamster leader and Hoffa associate whom the police were already questioning in the case.

Psychologists say that almost everything we experience is permanently recorded in our brains, but only a small portion is available to be recalled at will by our conscious minds. In the hypnotic trance state, "lost" memories can be recalled, even from the distant past, and often in vivid detail. This ability is called *hypermnesia*, the opposite of amnesia.

In a Yale University study of hypermnesia, a bricklayer volunteered to be an experimental subject. Ten years earlier the man had helped construct some of the University's neo-Gothic buildings, using irregularly sized bricks that had to be arranged in esthetically pleasing patterns to form interior walls, corners, arches, and doorways. Under hypnosis the man was able to recall incredibly minute details of his work of a decade before.

The bricklayer was asked to describe a specific brick he had cemented into place in a particular wall on a certain date. He was able to remember the brick: it was darker than the others because it had been kept in the kiln a little too long. A purple pebble was embedded in the clay in the lower left-hand corner. There was a slight bulge in the upper right-hand corner of the brick, which the bricklayer had matched to a hollow in the brick just above it. The man estimated he had laid almost two thousand bricks that day, but he was able to recall the smallest details of this and other bricks the psychologists asked him about.

The power of hypnosis to recall lost memories extends beyond its use in cases where details have simply been forgotten. The technique can be used to overcome memory blocks resulting from traumatic experiences. Last December a worker at a Florida fruit stand was found after he had been badly slashed by a razor-wielding attacker. The victim required 1,265 stitches to close his wounds. After he recovered he could recall nothing of the incident, including the identity of his assailant. The investigators called in Julian Arroyo, the police chief of nearby Tavares, Florida, who is a self-taught hypnotist who uses the technique in his detective work.

Under hypnosis, the victim recalled the attack and the name of his attacker. The slasher was the man's boss, and the victim had seen him every day following his release from the hospital, yet the traumatic nature of the incident had blocked all memory of it.

In a similar case in Georgia, two police officers stopped a truck suspected of having been used in a burglary. As they approached the vehicle they were gunned down by the driver. One officer was killed and the other wounded. The surviving policeman had little recollection of the truck or the gunman.

The police called in Dr. Edwin Hall, a psychologist who has conducted hypnotic examinations in nearly forty criminal cases. Dr. Hall hypnotized the police officer and took him back in time to the night of the shooting. He told the policeman to observe the events of that night as though he were watching them on television, but in slow motion. When the officer reached the shooting incident, Hall ordered him to freeze the action and describe the still picture he saw in his mind's eye. The policeman was then able to give a fully detailed description of both the truck and the driver.

The use of hypnosis by police investigators is increasing. In Los Angeles; San Antonio, Texas; and Orlando, Florida, the technique is used routinely, while police forces in New Jersey and Kansas employ staff hypnotists.

The legal status of testimony obtained under hyphosis is somewhat uncertain. A problem arises because the hypnotized subject is in an extremely suggestible mental state and may be intentionally or inadvertently manipulated by the hypnotist. Although some judges have accepted hypnotically induced testimony on a limited basis, the chief value of the technique (as with truth serum and the polygraph) is to provide an investigative aid that can lead to the discovery of more orthodox kinds of evidence.

Next Month: The Bug in Spiro Agnew's Office.

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AIRPORT SECURITY

Eleven Air Force planes are parked on a square-shaped runway. For nighttime security, guard dogs were originally kept aboard each plane. However, the airport security chief has recently decided to use the dogs only around the perimeter of the runway. He uses electronic beams to catch anyone who somehow eludes the dogs and tries to board one of the planes. The electronic beams travel in a straight line, and are shot across the runway to keep each plane separated from the others. What are the *fewest* number of beams that must be used to isolate each of the eleven planes? Answers to Airport Security will be found on page 128.

COMPLETE THE MYSTERY

Fill in the blanks in these mystery-suspense titles.

Margery Allingham
Death and the _____ _____

Eric Ambler
Journey ____ ____

Ross Macdonald
__ _____ Enemy

Maj Sjöwall and Per Wahlöö
The ____ Policeman

Ian Fleming
Diamonds __ _____

John Buchan
The Three _____

Mickey Spillane
Kiss __, _____

Erle Stanley Gardner
The ____ of the Grinning _____

Doris Miles Disney
Do Not ____, _____ or _____

Raymond Chandler
_____ __ the Rain

Arthur Conan Doyle
The _____ __ Fear

John D. MacDonald
Darker ____ ____

William McGivern
Night of the _____

Helen MacInnes
The _____ Affair

Agatha Christie
_____ __ Remember

Ellery Queen
The Murderer is a __

Mary Roberts Rinehart
__ _____ Staircase

Leslie Charteris
_____ for the Saint

Dorothy Sayers
The Nine _____

Rex Stout
The Golden _____

Answers to Complete the Mystery will be found on page 127.

THE MYSTERIOUS AUTHOR

Many mystery and suspense authors write under pseudonyms. See if you can match the following pseudonyms with the real names of the authors.

PSEUDONYMS	REAL NAMES
Eliot Reed	C. Day Lewis
Peter Anthony	Eric Ambler
Josephine Bell	Judson Philips
Nicholas Blake	Peter Shaffer and Anthony Shaffer
Ross Macdonald	Agatha Christie
Ed McBain	Evan Hunter
Edgar Box	Morton Freedgood
Carter Dickson	Gore Vidal
Hugh Pentecost	Willard Huntington Wright
Mary Westmacott	Kenneth Millar
Gordon Ashe	Robert Fish
Robert Pike	John Dickson Carr
John Godey	John Creasey
William Irish	David John Moore Cornwall
John Le Carré	Cornell Woolrich
Ellery Queen	Doris Bell Collier Ball
Richard Stark	Donald Westlake
Josephine Tey	Frederic Dannay and Manfred Lee
S.S. Van Dine	Elizabeth MacKintosh

Answers to the Mysterious Author will be found on page 128.

WHO STOLE THE BALL?

Mr. and Mrs. James invited six guests for dinner and cards. The guests included Mr. and Mrs. Smith, Mr. and Mrs. Town, and Mr. and Mrs. Green. When the evening was over and all the guests had left, Mr. James discovered that an expensive silver ball was missing from the living room coffee table. From the following information, see if you can deduce which of the dinner guests walked off with the cup. Answers to Who Stole the Ball? will be found on page 128

1. When being introduced to Mr. Smith, Mrs. Town was holding the ball in her hand.
2. Mr. Green, because of his broken leg, remained in the same seat most of the evening.
3. The thief's spouse lost fifteen dollars in the after-dinner card game.
4. Mrs. Smith and one of the other women did not play cards.
5. Mr. Smith had played golf with the thief earlier that day.
6. Mr. Green won enough money at cards to make up for his wife's losses.

CONTEST OF THE MONTH

The competition is in two parts. Part One is a test of mystery history, lore, and general knowledge of both books and films. Part Two is a cryptogram. There will be three winners. These will be the contestants who have correctly answered both parts and whose responses carry the three *earliest* postmarks. All three prizes are for $50.*

CONTEST RULES:

One entry only should be sent to COMPETITION, MYSTERY MONTHLY, 119 West 57th Street, New York, N.Y. 10019. Relatives of individuals **in any way** connected to the magazine are ineligible. This includes anyone related to the production of the magazine: typesetter, printer, etc. Editors' decisions are final, and all entries become the property of *Mystery Monthly*. Correct answers will be published in the next issue. Winners' names will be announced in a subsequent issue. All entries must be postmarked *on or before September 7.*

(In the event of more than three qualifying winning entries, there will be a drawing.)

PART ONE

1. Which best-selling mystery author made his detective a rabbi?
2. Which English thriller writer centers many of his books around flying?
3. Which Ngaio Marsh mystery first introduced Superintendent Roderick Alleyn?
4. Who, until his death in 1968, wrote the "Criminals at Large" review column for *the New York Times Book Review*?
5. Whose novel, *The Rainbird Pattern*, was recently adapted into Alfred Hitchcock's *Family Plot*?
6. Who is the author of *The Billion Dollar Brain*?
7. In which famous suspense novel is the opening line as follows: "Last night I dreamt I went to Manderly again." Who is the author?
8. Which well-regarded American mystery author is so meticulous that he usually writes only one short story a year?
9. Who is the creator of the Falcon?
10. Which American parodist is responsible for a series of stories about "Schlock Holmes"?
11. Which European author has set many of his mysteries in Holland, and is the creator of Inspector Van Der Valk?
12. Who is the author of *The Taking of Pelham One Two Three*?
13. In which famous novel of political corruption do the characters Ned Beaumont and Paul Madvig appear?
14. Who were the male and female stars of Alfred Hitchcock's *Notorious*?
15. Which American author has published close to four hundred short stories, many of which involve either Captain Leopold or Simon Ark?
16. Which former White House adviser drew on his own CIA experience to write numerous spy novels?
17. Which Austrian-born film director is

***This contest void where prohibited by federal, state, or local law.**

responsible for such suspense classics as *Manhunt*, *The Big Heat*, and *Beyond a Reasonable Doubt*?

18. Who is by day a respected, sophisticated gentleman, and by night a brilliant, daring thief known as the Lone Wolf?
19. Which successful economist is Travis McGee's neighbor and sometime assistant?
20. Which famed British actress portrayed Miss Jane Marple in a series of films about the amateur detective?
21. Which nineteenth-century author of quasi-fictional crime stories gathered his source material from the famous detective agency bearing his name?
22. Which well-known detective is five feet four inches tall, with an egg-shaped head, dark hair, and a waxed mustache?
23. Who is the creator of the Scarlet Pimpernel?
24. Who is the best-known black detective who recently appeared in *Five Pieces of Jade*?
25. Who is the author of *The Busy Body*?

PART TWO

Answer the question asked in the following cryptogram.

QCAL CPZTLR NMUYNYBYE'F PCULFU ABVML

Answers to this month's contest will appear in the November issue.

Answers to July Mystery Monthly Contest

1. In which famous mystery does the legendary Count Fosco appear? **(*The Woman in White*)**
2. Whose detective novels have colors in all their titles? **(John D. MacDonald)**
3. What famous police superintendent has as his constant companion an inspector he calls "Br'er Fox"? **(Roderick Alleyn)**
4. Who is generally considered the father of the modern spy story? **(Eric Ambler)**
5. What is the name of the detective who is head of the Stockholm Homicide Squad? Who is his creator? **(Martin Beck, created by Maj Sjöwall and Per Wahlöö)**
6. Which famous detective appears in *Behind That Curtain*? **(Charlie Chan)**
7. What was the name of Agatha Christie's first published mystery? **(*The Mysterious Affair at Styles*)**
8. What prolific writer is the author of *Witch of the Low Tide*? **(John Dickson Carr)**
9. Which famous detective is at work in "The Doom of the Darnaways"? **(Father Brown)**
10. Who is the author of *Prester John*? **(John Buchan)**
11. In which book by Graham Greene does Pinkie Brown appear? **(*Brighton Rock*)**
12. Which well-known American mystery "puzzle-maker" of the Twenties had his amateur detective educated at Harvard and speak pompously about art? **(S.S. Van Dine)**
13. In which Hitchcock movie does a man fall from the top of the Statue of Liberty? **(*Saboteur*)**
14. In which current best-selling thriller is Winston Churchill a target for assassination? **(*The Eagle Has Landed*)**
15. Which widely published British author (now deceased) is responsible for *The Traitor's Gate*? **(Edgar Wallace)**
16. What is the name of the original soci-

ety whose sole purpose is the study of Sherlock Holmes? **(Baker Street Irregulars)**

17. Name the two men who write under the name of Ellery Queen. **(Frederick Dannay and Manfred Lee)**
18. Who is the author of *Six Against Scotland Yard*? (Hint: British and female.) **(Margery Allingham)**
19. Who starred in the film version of Len Deighton's *The Ipcress File*? **(Michael Caine)**
20. Which famous mystery writer wrote the short story which was the basis for Hitchcock's *Rear Window*? **(Cornell Woolrich)**
21. Who is the author of *No Way to Treat a Lady*? **(William Goldman)**
22. In what classic mystery play are the murderers two sweet old ladies? **(*Arsenic and Old Lace*)**
23. Who is the creator of Assistant Commissioner Sir John Appleby? **(Michael Innes)**
24. Name a principal in the film version of Eric Ambler's *Coffin For Dimitrios*. **(Peter Lorre, Sydney Greenstreet, Zachary Scott)**
25. What is the name of Hercule Poirot's manservant? **(Georges)**

The form of the cryptogram was that of a simple substitution cipher.

Plaintext:
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

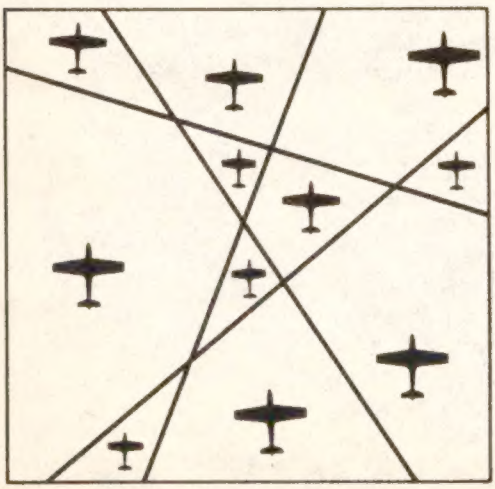
Cipher:
26 24 22 20 18 16 14 12 10 8 6 4 2 1 3 5 7 9 11 13 15 17 19 21 23 25

Consequently—

1	26	2	18		26	14	26	13	12	26		22	12	9	10	11	13	10	18	'	11						
N	A	M	E		A	G	A	T	H	A		C	H	R	I	S	T	I	E	'	S						
4	26	11	13		5	15	24	4	10	11	12	18	20		24	3	3	6									
L	A	S	T		P	U	B	L	I	S	H	E	D		B	O	O	K									

The answer is **Curtain.**

Answer to Airport Security



The eleven planes can be separated by four electronic beams, as shown in the picture.

Answers to
Who Stole the Ball

Mr. Smith is obviously not the thief, from statement 5. Since, according to 6, Mrs. Green *did* play poker, the two women who did *not* play, according to 4, were Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Town. Therefore from 3, Mr. Town is not the thief. Mrs. Green's husband won (6), and so Mrs. Green is not guilty (3). Mr. Green is also not guilty because with his broken leg (2), he could not have played golf (5). Mrs. Town could not have played golf with Mr. Smith because, according to 1, she did not know him until that evening. Consequently, from 5, she is not the thief. By process of elimination, the culprit has to be Mrs. Smith.

Answers to
Complete the Mystery

Death and the *Dancing Footman*
Journey *into Fear*
The *Instant* Enemy
The *Laughing* Policeman
Diamonds *Are Forever*
The Three *Hostages*
Kiss *Me, Deadly*
The *Case* of the Grinning *Gorilla*
Do Not *Fold, Spindle* or *Mutilate*
Killer in the Rain
The *Valley of* Fear
Darker *Than Amber*
Night of the *Juggler*
The *Venetian* Affair
Elephants Can Remember
The Murderer is a *Fox*
The Circular Staircase
Vendetta for the Saint
The Nine *Tailors*
The Golden *Spiders*

Answers to
The Mysterious Author

Eliot Reed	Eric Ambler
Peter Anthony	Peter Shaffer and Anthony Shaffer
Josephine Bell	Doris Bell Collier Ball
Nicholas Blake	C. Day Lewis
Ross Macdonald	Kenneth Millar
Ed McBain	Evan Hunter
Edgar Box	Gore Vidal
Carter Dickson	John Dickson Carr
Hugh Pentecost	Judson Philips
Mary Westmacott	Agatha Christie
Gordon Ashe	John Creasey
Robert Pike	Robert Fish
John Godey	Morton Freedgood
William Irish	Cornell Woolrich
John Le Carré	David John Moore Cornwall
Ellery Queen	Frederic Dannay and Manfred Lee
Richard Stark	Donald Westlake
Josephine Tey	Elizabeth MacKintosh
S.S. Van Dine	Willard Huntington Wright

Oops! We goofed Dep't: In our August issue the second sentence of The Unknown Victim puzzle (p. 122) should have read: "One of the five killed *one of* the other four."

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Leslie Charteris. Catch the Saint. ($5.95)

Mignon G. Eberhart. Danger Money. ($5.95)

Gordon Ashe. The Big Call. ($5.95)

Brian Garfield. Death Wish. ($5.95)
Death Sentence. ($6.95)

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